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Online edition of India's National Newspaper  
Monday, Nov 02, 2009  
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### "Low-cost technology needed"

Staff Reporter

*For effective sanitation coverage: expert*

— Photo: S.S.Kumar



**Promoting hygiene: Shyama V. Ramani, founder of Friend in Need Trust (India), addressing a workshop on sanitation in Chennai on Sunday.**

CHENNAI: Institutes of technology have to come up with low-cost technology for toilets which use less water in order to achieve effective sanitation coverage and reduce environmental contamination, said Shyama V. Ramani, founder of Friend in Need Trust (India).

Speaking at the first 'Programme Finish' workshop organised at the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS) here on Sunday, she said the financial, technological and social challenges faced by the 'Programme Finish' had to be tackled by the collective effort of international organisations, firms, researchers, non-governmental organisations and citizens. "We also want more volunteers to work with us," she said.

'Programme Finish' has a goal of building one million toilets largely mobilising funds from the end users in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

The programme works towards financial inclusion to improve sanitation and health in various parts of the country, Dr. Ramani said.

Two-thirds of the people in the country do not have access to a toilet and more than 40 per cent of the existing toilets are not being used, said S. Janakarajan, professor of MIDS. There is lack of sanitation coverage and 42,000 people die every week owing to drinking water polluted with faecal matter, he said.

NGOs such as BISWA in Orissa, IIRD in Rajasthan, ESAF in Maharashtra, SAMBHAV in Madhya Pradesh and BHARATHI in Tamil Nadu and WASTE, a Dutch NGO, are joining hands with insurance organisations like TATA-AIG and

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financial institutions like SNS-REAL, NHB and NABARD to mobilise funds from end-users to build the sanitation systems.

People in rural areas of Tamil Nadu are reluctant to spend money for building a toilet. They want it free, said S. Paranjothi, field officer, Friend in Need Trust.

There is a need for more awareness of sanitation in the State, said Jordan Trombetta, a volunteer.

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