

The Hindu 24.08.2016

## Namma Toilet puts students' health at risk in Pazhayapettai

Unhygienic: Open drain of Namma Toilet carrying human excreta abutting the wall of the noon-meal kitchen of Municipality Government Middle School in Pazhayapettai, Krishnagiri.- Photo: N. Bashkaran

Clumps of human excreta float along the open drain abutting the Municipality run Government Girls Middle School in Pazhayapettai. Above the drain afloat with excreta, overlooks the vent of the noon meal kitchen of the school.

The Namma Toilet of Krishnagiri Municipality is letting out human excreta into the public drain as it is not connected to a septic tank.

For the students of the Municipality Government Girls Middle School in Pazhayapettai, it is a daily ordeal to keep their sights away from the drain that they have to cross for entry into the school. The noon-meal kitchen, which abuts the drain, throws

serious concerns of health safety protocols.

Here, the Municipality has not provisioned for septic tanks for Namma Toilets, says Gora, a local auto-driver, who parks his vehicle in the vicinity of the toilet. "The teachers and the staff of the school are tight-lipped because it is a municipality school, and they cannot speak up."

The plight of Namma Toilet of Krishnagiri has breached the boundaries of mere concerns over sanitation and seems to have crossed over to real concerns of human rights violation.

The Prohibition of Employment of Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, forbids both engagement of manual scavengers and discharge of excreta into public drains.

According to the Act, the local body shall demolish such toilets of individuals. The Act also provides for a fine of Rs.50,000 and one year imprisonment of the first time offender; and Rs.1 lakh fine and two year imprisonment for second time offence. The Act assumes that the violators will be individuals.

However, here the local body is the violator.

Invariably, the drain will pollute other storm water drains too, says another person not wanting to be named. It might result in manual scavengers cleaning up these drains at some point.

On the other hand, Namma Toilet on Salem road near the roundabout has remained locked for over months.

“This toilet has remained shut for more than a year,” says a local shop-keeper. While the local body is going around slapping fine for water stagnation in household compounds as part of its anti-dengue drive, the Namma Toilet in Pazhayapettai, barely a couple of 100- meters from the Municipality is posing a health risks.

Speaking to *The Hindu* , Municipal Commissioner Kannan, said there was a design flaw in Namma Toilets. They were conceived as urinals, and there was no design for defecation.

## **UGD line**

“It was anticipated only as a urinal and it became a failure. However, there is a new proposal to link all government buildings, schools, Municipal buildings, including toilets to the UGD line. Once that is implemented, there is no need for septic tank,” he said.