



Mangaluru Ramakrishna mission Swacchata Abhiyan

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Introduction

Ramakrishna Mission, Mangalore is a branch of the worldwide organization, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission started by Swami Vivekananda, a century ago. Since its inception in Mangalore more than six decades back, the Ashram has initiated several welfare activities for the benefit of the needy. Our main focus has been instilling values in youths, students, teachers, professionals and the corporate. All our programmes have been well received thanks to the quality, content and commitment of our institution for the ideal it represents.

“Swacch Mangaluru a plan for Swacch Bharath” programme which was inaugurated on the 1st February 2015 at a grand function attended by about 1500 youths, general public and several eminent men of repute. 75 sweepers and other workers of City Corporation was honoured as a token of respect for their services in keeping the city clean. Government of India had made a special request to the Headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission at Belur, Howrah, to take up the Abhiyan. On the advice of the Headquarters, the Branch of the Mission in Mangaluru took up the Abhiyan in right earnest, and immediately called upon its devotees, well-wishers and the public to join this historic Abhiyan. The response was beyond anybody's guess.

How was it done?

In the first phase, the Abhiyan involved about 25000 youths and volunteers cleaning the city and improving basic amenities under the aegis of Ramakrishna Mission for 40 consecutive Sundays. 40 successful drives were already completed in the first phase in different localities. In addition, “Swacch Manas for Swacch Bharath” was also conducted - an evening with our young volunteers who join their hands in the cleanliness drive. As they assemble in the Ashram on Saturdays, they were taught meditation, briefed about our activities, the need for this programme, creating awareness among them regarding their social responsibilities and inculcating values

among them through interaction, discourse and bhajans etc. They are also provided food, tea, snacks and accommodation.

This Initiative included

- Renovation of dilapidated and neglected bus shelters.
- Repair & renewal of Auto rickshaw stands
- Urgent & minor road repairs
- Cleaning roads and public places
- Repair of footpaths & Adopting a few roads
- Awareness programme through distribution of literature (about 1500 persons every week)
- Clearance of drainage and garbage
- Painting and beautification of compound walls
- Clearing unutilized dumping places for public utility
- Developing gardens and planting saplings at road medians.
- Planting saplings on roadsides.

It was held every Saturday evenings and on Sunday for about three hours in the morning by the volunteers.

How was it done?

The First and Second Phase

The First Phase was inaugurated on 1st February 2015 at the Ashrama premises. It continued for 20 weeks non-stop up to June 2015. A special highlight of the inaugural function was honouring of 75 street sweepers under the service of Mangaluru City Corporation. While honouring they were offered fruits, flowers, shawls and sarees in the presence of eminent citizens. This is how the Ramakrishna Mission Mangaluru recognized their invaluable services in keeping the city clean for years. About 1500 youths who had assembled also took oath of "Swacch Mangaluru" for "Swacch Bharath". The function was preceded by a spirited rally composed of 1000 youths on the streets of the city.

In the first 2 phases, about 40 drives were conducted in and around Mangaluru involving around 8000 volunteers.

Third Phase: Concept and Action

Encouraged by the overwhelming response towards the First and Second Phases of the Abhiyan, the Third Phase was launched on 2nd October 2016.

The structure, functions and action plan of the Third Phase had been conceptualized as follows:

- There were 40 teams having 40-50 volunteers each. Teams were given maximum freedom to function as per the local situation.
- Each team was to offer service on just one Sunday in a month.
- The first set of 10 teams would work on first Sunday of each month, and that is all for that month. The second set of 10 teams on 2nd Sunday and the third and fourth sets on third and fourth Sundays. In one word, forty programmes would be covered during each month.
- The Third Phase went on from October 2, 2016 to July 2017. However, during south-west monsoon, for two months Abhiyan was suspended. On the whole 40 Sundays (10 months) were covered during the period October 2016 to July 2017. The 40 teams covered about 400 locations.
- The teams worked under the guidance of the coordinators. Ramakrishna Mission, Mangaluru provided the following items to each team:

Vivekananda T-Shirts, Cleaning equipment (which were kept with the teams), Awareness literature, banners, brochures/flyers, Vehicles to transport garbage to the dumping places, Financial assistance, Refreshments.

In the 3rd phase, 400 cleanliness drives were successfully carried out in different parts of the city through 60 groups guided and supported by the Ashrama. About 50000 volunteers actively participated in the drives that were carried out on Sunday mornings.

In the current 4th phase that was started on 3rd November 2017, Abhiyan has been channelized into 4 different modules. In the first, daily Abhiyan, the Ashrama has formed 30 groups who visit door to door spreading the message of awareness about hygiene and cleanliness and solid waste segregation. Daily more than 100 households & shops are covered in this.

In the second weekly Abhiyan carried out on Sundays for 3-4 hours, an area prone to dumping of solid waste is selected and with the help of 300-400 volunteers the spot is cleaned and basic civic amenities are repaired or beautified like repair and renewal of bus shelters, painting compound walls, converting dumping yards into small gardens etc. directly benefitting the public.

In the third, about 100 villages are earmarked and with the help from District Administration and cleanliness drive is carried out once in a month in each village.

In the fourth titled, "Swacch Manas", the message of awareness is being taken out to students, who are the future citizens of this nation. Students (10750 nos) from 108 schools in and around Mangaluru have been enrolled as "Swacchata Senanis". With the help of 50 resource persons, an activity is conducted in each school once in a month, like swacchata talks, competitions, conducting cleanliness drives in their school premises, garbage segregation, "Swacch Ambassador Workshop" for selected 500 students, bringing out a workbook to create awareness among the students about cleanliness etc.

Special feature of the “Swacchata Abhiyan” being carried out by Mangaluru Ramakrishna Mission is participation by people irrespective of caste, creed, colour, age or religion. The consistency of the abhiyan as well as the genuine concern of the Ashrama to keep our surroundings clean has attracted thousands to become volunteers in this Abhiyan. It has become a mass movement and the main purpose of reaching out to the common mass with the message of awareness about cleanliness is being slowly and consistently achieved.

4th Phase 2017-2018

- Total registered Volunteers - 20000
- Number of villages adopted for Cleanliness - 115
- Schools adopted to create awareness - 108 (107500 Students)
- Nitya Jagruthi Teams - 50

Conclusion

“Swacch Mangaluru Abiyan” has become a “Jan Andolan” receiving tremendous support from the people. Citizens too are turning out in large numbers and pledging for a neat and cleaner Mangaluru. Taking the broom to sweep the streets, cleaning up the garbage, focusing on sanitation and maintaining a hygienic environment has become a habit with many after the launch of “Swacch Mangaluru Abhiyan”. People have started to take part and are helping to spread the message of ‘cleanliness is next to Godliness’.