

April 2021

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A deeper look at
Co-Creating **Eco-Habitats..**

Organo Newsletter - April 2021

Lessons from Saptha Patha

Bio Pool

Bio-pools are wonderful to swim in. But as the name suggests, it is a biological environment which has ecosystems thriving in it. Depending on the season and aquatic life, there will be algae blooming in the pool. This is very unlike conventional swimming pools which are treated with high doses of chlorine and have no life in it.

One of the key aspects we didn't take into consideration was the importance of communicating what exactly bio-pool constitutes of. We hadn't communicated that it would be slimy at the bottom like a pond that you would find in rural villages. This caused some concerns about maintenance of the pool as people started comparing it with conventional pools.

We should have clearly stated the fundamental difference between a chemically treated pool and a natural pond. A natural pool is healthy with clean water but also houses other life forms in it which are essential for the natural cleansing process.

Our suggestion to people who are interested to build a bio-pool in their community is that while it is beneficial for both the users and nature, education must be done properly. However, people who have the experience of swimming in village ponds would rejoice in the bio pools because the water is pristine, fresh, and very much alive.

What we should focus on is a mindset adjustment that can enable people to get close to the natural set up and appreciate the healthy benefits.



“Safe and Witnessed” is the new Organic



Organic food has been a rage for health-conscious consumers over the past decade. But one question that lingers in everyone who looks to buy “Organic” food products is “What is Organic?” and “How does it differ from similar products that are not Labelled as such”. To try and answer the above questions and to understand the nature of the ecosystem surrounding Organic Food one must delve into the developments that have taken place in the Indian Farming sector over the past 60 odd years.

In the 1960s, India was suffering from massive food shortage and consequently there were a lot of hunger deaths. To assuage the situation and to make the country self-sufficient in terms of food supply the government invited many foreign agriculture experts and implemented methods suggested by them. Soon, various states in India were identified for growing the staples such as wheat, rice, and pulses. The “new” way of farming which focused on improved productivity per acre and harvest size required the farmers to use chemical fertilizers, resort to mono-cropping (growing only one kind of crop). Over the next three decades, this ensured that food production increased drastically. But it also meant that farmers became dependent on these methods and it became generally accepted in the farming community that using chemical fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides is the norm to grow food.

After 60 years of Green revolution and the associated practices it brought, most of the mainstream farmers and allied support systems actively use chemicals for growing food crops. This has led to most of the land becoming contaminated with chemical waste which has reached poisonous levels.

A key aspect which is somehow missed out in any discourse is the fact that before the green revolution in India, most of the farmers were using traditional methods of cultivation to grow food (including vegetables) and fight/ handle pest and insect infestation.

Most of this knowledge which was usually passed down the generations through oral means, saw a near total extinction only to be revived again with the onset of awareness about the benefits of eating Organic food. But the number of farmers “actually” growing food using non-chemical based and traditional methods is very less.

It is interesting to note that the availability of food products labelled as Organic has increased quite significantly in the last 5 years whereas commensurate increase in the actual acreage on which such food is to be produced is not observed. So, the question arises, is all the food labelled Organic actually Organic?

Ability vs availability

Even though one has the “ability” to pay for accessing Organic food, the availability and most importantly traceability of the produce has become a challenge. It is very difficult to ascertain whether a food product which is labelled as Organic is really Organic. One can say any product which has Organic certification from a recognized body/institution can be thought of as Organic. However, the elephant in the room is that there are multiple Organizations/ institutions which provide Organic certification, each with varied definitions of what it means to be Organic when it comes to the items they certify.



Dawn of a new Paradigm:

Hence, there needs to be a paradigm shift in terms of how we access and consume food. To answer this question, slowly but steadily the concept of safe and witnessed food is gaining momentum. This concept envisages a direct relationship between the producers and consumers of food. It strives to operate at a new level which is above the certification business. The Organic Certification agencies use methods which levy penalty for violations and are in most cases unable to ensure that the food they certify is actually produced using the methods they envisaged due to sheer lack of ability to monitor every field which they certify. The concept of safe and witnessed food bridges this gap through direct interaction and bonding between the producer and farmer and thereby enabling access and availability to the consumers and producers.

The consumers regularly communicate with and understand the producer (farmer) and the price discovery takes place in an Organic manner such that both the parties get the best out of the relationship. It can be safely said that witnessed food is the new “Organic food”.



My Little Adjustment



Sathya Raghu

"The only little compromise that we've had to make was the distance. Yes, Naandi is a little away from the city, but come to think of it, hardly so. It simply comes down to starting the day a few minutes or even an hour earlier than otherwise to be able to reach my workplace on time. That, in my opinion, is hardly a compromise for the life that we live here.

Look at the flipside and you'll see that distance is hardly a factor. Simply by virtue of being a bit away from the city, living at Naandi offers one of the most precious things. And that is silence. Where can you find the sound of silence in the city? We are drowned in the sounds of honking there. But the day is filled with the chirping of birds here, the buzz of insects, the rustle of the wind.

I love reading amid this kind of silence broken only by the sounds of nature. This is the kind of silence that would make you want to go deep within yourself in a moment of delicious solitude. What are a few additional kilometers in comparison with this?"

Life at Naandi



Kishore Sajja

"I love the Rurban way of living in Naandi. Having grown up in a village, this is the perfect place that I have found to reconnect with my roots. My home at Naandi has all the amenities of modern living that I can look for. In fact, I would say that it is more modern than my house in the city! Yet, the rural way of life blends in so seamlessly here. Waking up to the chirping of birds, the fragrance of the earth after the rain and the greenery everywhere reminds me of my growing up years.

I like everything about Naandi but the goshala is one of my favourite places. It is a huge value add to the community and the living experience here. I wish there were dirt roads instead of tarred ones. The village look and feel would have then been complete! Besides, I love the 'farm to fork' concept. The vegetables that are grown here are fresh and tasty. And I can say with full confidence that they are organic. Many people claim to be growing organic produce, but it never usually is the case. At Naandi though, there is strict adherence to natural and organic practices of growing food that you can see right from your own backyard or balcony."

Organo Et School



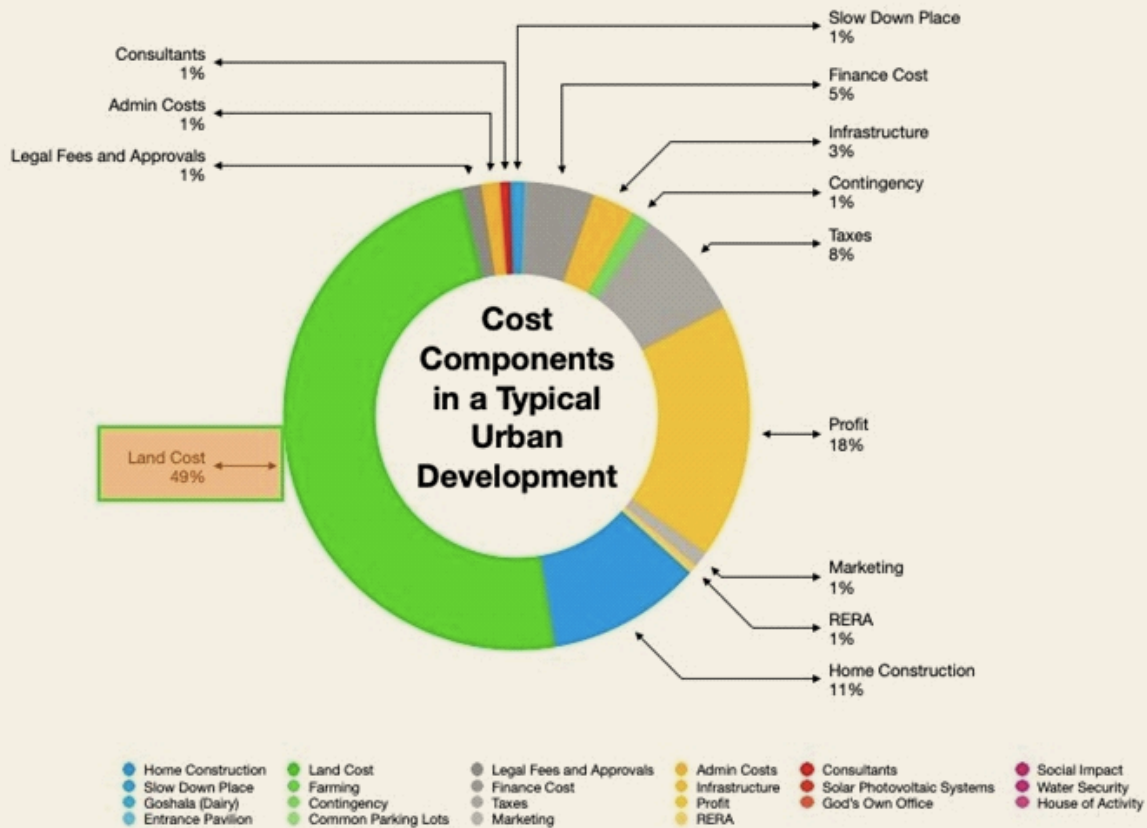
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The Real Value of Investment

Typically, in a Real Estate investment in cities, more than 50% of the cost is spent in land acquisition. The other components such as shelter, and infrastructure depreciate over time. Not only this but the natural resources such as groundwater table, flora and fauna are also depleted and destroyed.

This is the result of overuse and sometimes abuse which makes these lands vulnerable to price fluctuations.

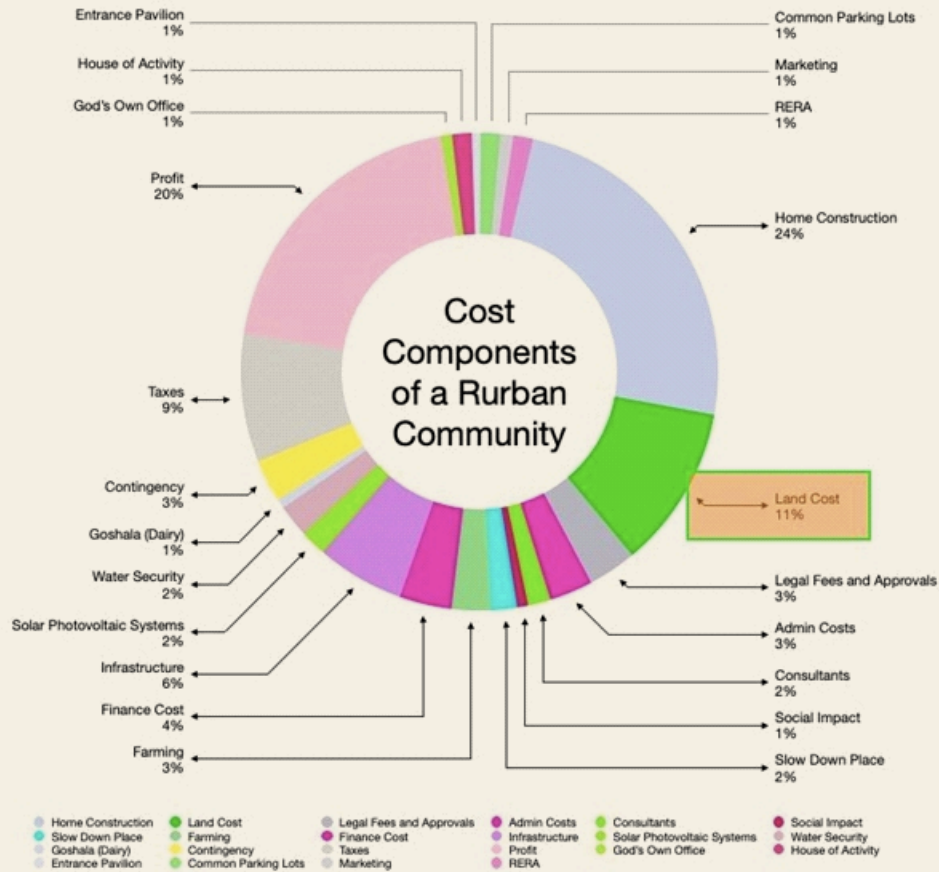


On the contrary, Organo chooses barren rural lands as eco-habitat sites and develops them with a long-term control on density to ensure conservation of resources and sustainability.



Above: Naandi when it first started to Naandi last year

Here, a major percentage of investment goes into developing productive infrastructure such as renewable energy, land fertility, productive Agri-Systems, passive health, afforestation, water security which are resilient to Real Estate market fluctuations.



These productive elements are the real value of land that appreciate and breathe life into the system.

Why do STPs Smell ?

Controlling odour is one of the most important and yet most challenging aspects of a sewage treatment plant. Foul smells are often a source of igniting objections from the neighbours. However, as levied from the Telangana govt it is mandatory to install STP in a housing community with an area of more than 10,000 sqm.

To understand how to tackle the smell, let us first understand what causes the odour at sewage treatment plants?

The typical odour is associated with rotten eggs, ammonia, or garlic, referred to by multiple people. Sometimes the odour is described as earthy or organic. Foul smell at treatment plants originates from the anaerobic decomposition of organic compounds. A natural by-product of anaerobic digestion is Hydrogen sulphide (H₂S), which gives off a strong smell of rotten eggs. It has low solubility in wastewater; hence it releases into the atmosphere, producing an offensive odour. Another critical aspect to understand is that not all odour is created equally; they vary in intensity. Also, weather conditions intensify the odour. For instance, temperature inversions, wind velocity and wind directions play a significant role in odour emission drifting. It is typically worse at higher temperatures. Hence, one might complain of the odour often during summers.

As this is a reviling problem in most communities, the first step in solving any odour is identifying the problem.

STOP - THINK - FLUSH



1. Odour can be coming from raw wastewater exposed to air at the influent pump station and primary stages
2. It can also be due to the build-up of sludge over a period. When the foul smell begins, it implies that the STP needs to be emptied, which ideally should be done once a year. Sometimes, the wastewater contains elements that cannot be broken down in a treatment plant.

It is highly advisable to educate the users to avoid dumping items such as sanitary napkins, food waste and diapers into the WC. Often air vents are installed if the problem is persistent. It may be due to blockages or air not circulating efficiently with the system.

Lastly, one of the significant reasons for STPs not working correctly is the fluctuations of input loads which the amount of wastewater entering the STP at a particular time. The flow of sewage in a residential community is never uniform. It varies with peak flows in the morning (residents getting ready to go to work), very low or almost no flows later in the day, with another rise in the evening. , it results in a situation called "sewage in sewage out". It takes a long time for the STP to stabilize and provide treated water by causing a foul smell. It is advised not to compromise on the equalizer tank capacity and uniformly distribute the wastewater flow. Hence, it is essential to understand the STP must be sized as per the requirement, maintained well by experienced supervisory staff. If all the measures are considered for a well-maintained STP, there are very few chances to smell.



(source: <https://tataandhoward.com/2018/05/please-do-not-flush/>)

Visitors of Naandi



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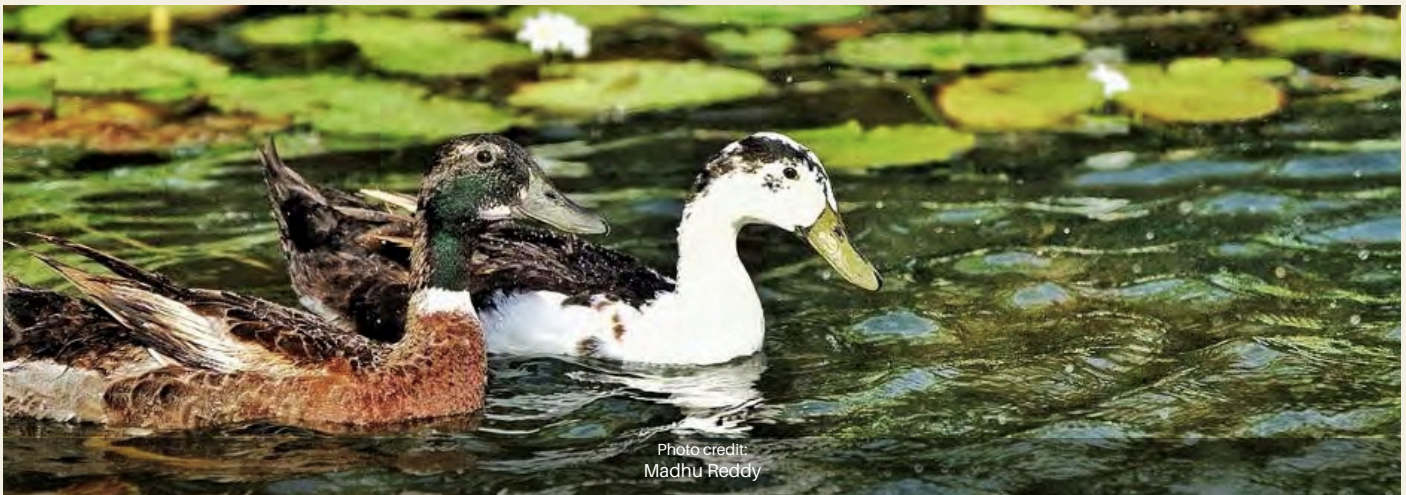


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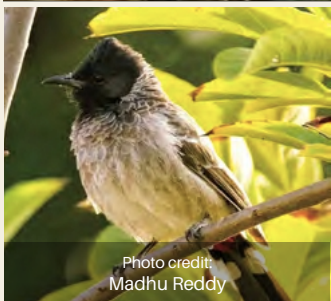


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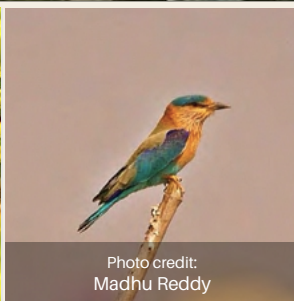


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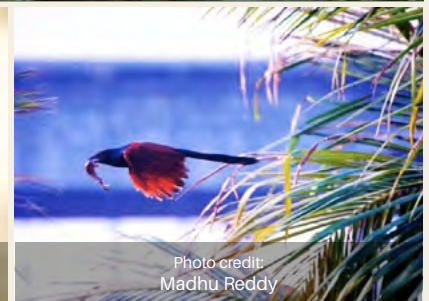


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Co-Creating Eco-Habitats that Celebrate The Living