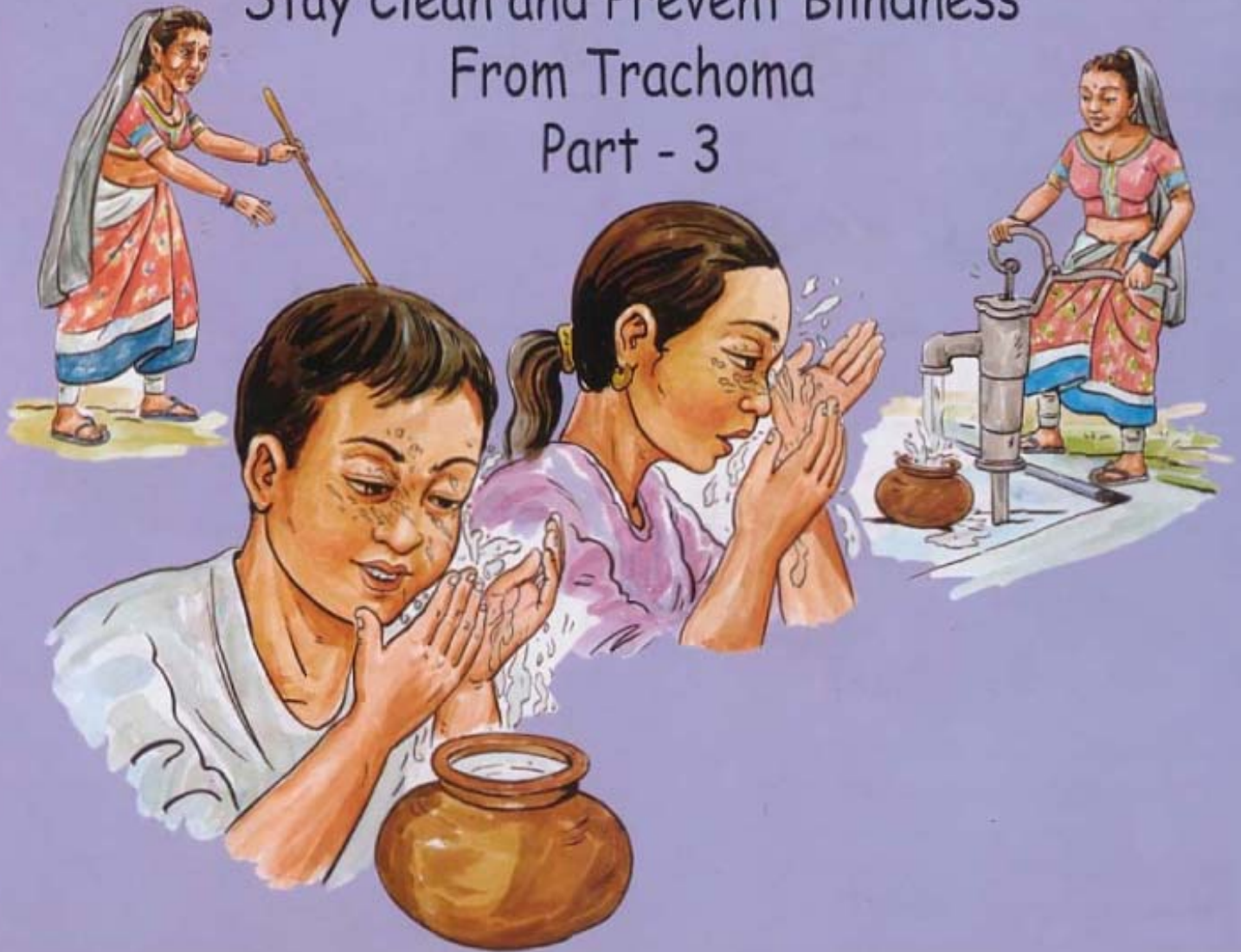


# Stay Clean and Prevent Blindness From Trachoma Part - 3



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## Auntie had Nearly Gone Blind



Once upon a time there was a little girl named Fulwa. Her face and clothes were always clean. She was very beautiful and had bright, glowing eyes. One day she went to visit her cousin Rita who was sick. She bought some fruits for her cousin.





Rita's eyes did not sparkle like her cousin's eyes. Fulwa washed and cut some fruits and asked Rita to eat them. Rita did not want to eat the fruits but Fulwa said "Fruits have a lot of vitamins in them and they will protect you from being sick. I eat fruits all the time. That is why I am strong and healthy. You should also eat it." Fulwa saw that Rita had runny eyes. Rita wiped her eyes with her hand and then wiped her hand on her skirt.





Seeing this Fulwa told her " Rita you should not do that. When you wipe your eyes with your fingers, the germs, which we cannot see, can spread from your eyes to your hand and from your hand to the cloth and if anyone uses that cloth, the germs will spread to other people. This is how the eye infection transmits from one person to another and if you have repeated eye infections, you may go blind. Don't you remember that if our auntie had not had the eye surgery on time, she would have gone blind?"





Rita asked "So, will I have the same kind of eye disease that auntie had, if I have runny eyes all the time?" Fulwa explained "When auntie had eye infection in her eyes, she did not take care about it. She never washed her face and never washed her clothes. Her eyes continued to be infected. She refused to go to the eye hospital for treatment. Slowly, her eyelashes started turning inwards and rubbed against her eyes. Gradually her vision started to become blurry."





"At last after much persuasion, she agreed to go to the eye hospital. The doctor at the hospital said that the eye-lashes had turned inwards due to a disease called trachoma. He said that if auntie did not have a surgery soon, she would become blind. Auntie was terrified when she heard this. The doctor did the surgery of her eyes. The surgery took only a short time and was simple. This way, auntie was saved from going blind."





Fulwa said, "Rita, you should not let that happen to you. You should go the Health Post immediately and have your eyes examined." Rita was very grateful to Fulwa. Fulwa was also very happy that she was able to help her cousin. She wanted to be a health worker in future and she was glad that she was able to start with her own family.





3. Why did Fulwa tell Rita not to wipe the discharge from her eyes with her hands?

4. How does trachoma spread?



5. What should you do to prevent your family from getting trachoma?

*Note:*

- *If anyone in your family or neighbourhood has got eye infection tell him/her to go to the Health Post.*
- *Find out how many people in your neighbourhood have their eye lashes turned inwards. Tell them to go to the Eye Hospital to have a surgery.*

**Activity:**

1. *Make the class do this activity to illustrate the transmission of disease:*

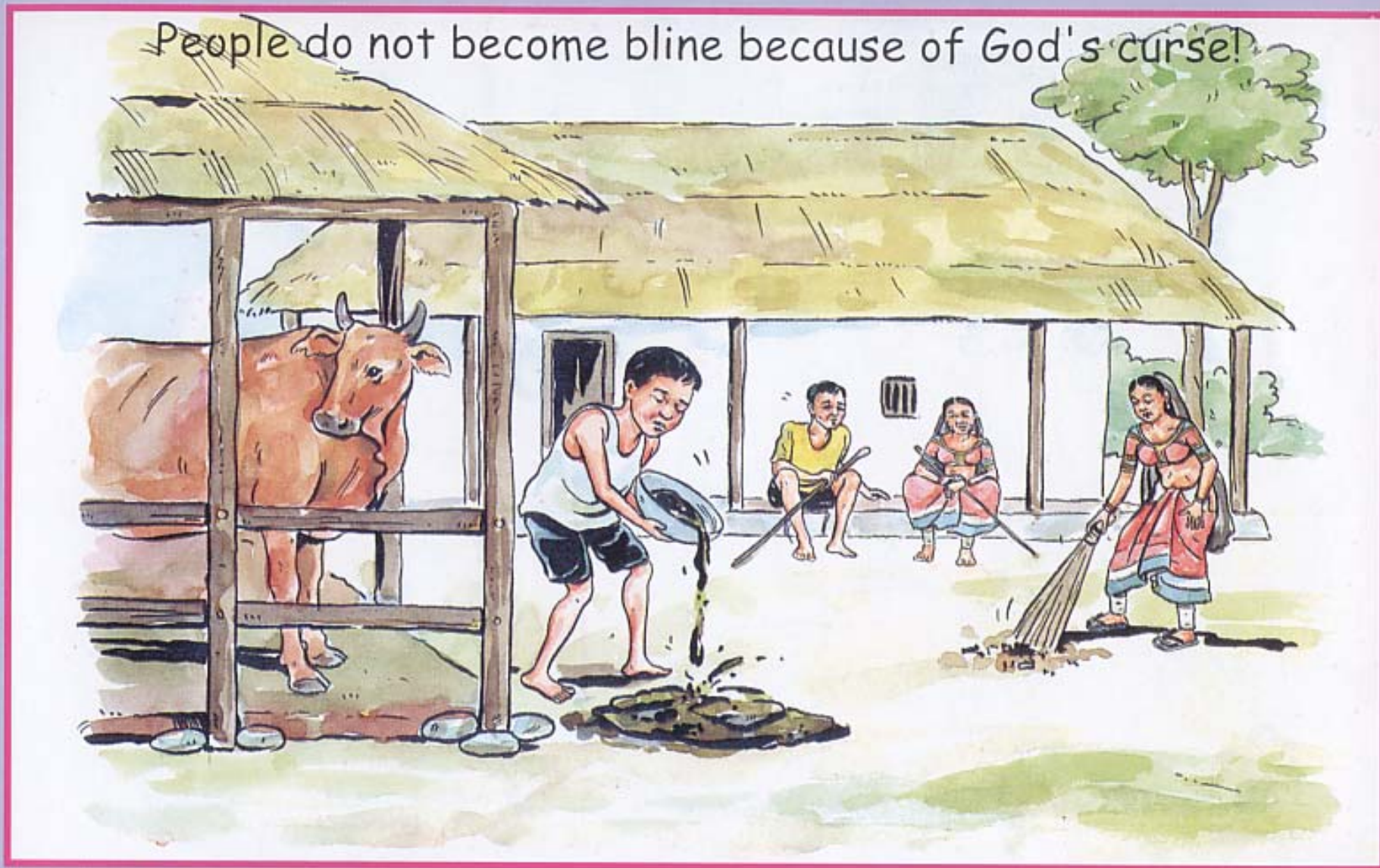
*The teacher should divide the students into groups of six. Ask the students to stand in a circle. Then smear some ink on the hands of one student in each group. Ask that student to hold a ball. Then have that student pass the ball to all the others in the group. In the end, Ask all the students to look at their hands. Everyone will have some ink on the hands. Explain to them that even though the ink was smeared on the hands of one person in a group, it passed on to all the others. Similarly trachoma germs can also be transmitted from one person to another person in this way.*

*Now ask all the students to go to the tap and wash their hands properly. Wash the ink smeared balls too. Then ask the students to form groups once again. Ask a student in the group to take the ball and pass it onto all the other students. Then have all the students look at their hands again. This time everyone's hand will look clean. Explain to them that if we wash our hands properly, trachoma germs cannot be transmitted from one person to another through hands.*

*After this activity the teacher should have a discussion in the class about how trachoma transmits and what can be done to prevent the transmission of the disease.*



People do not become blind because of God's curse!



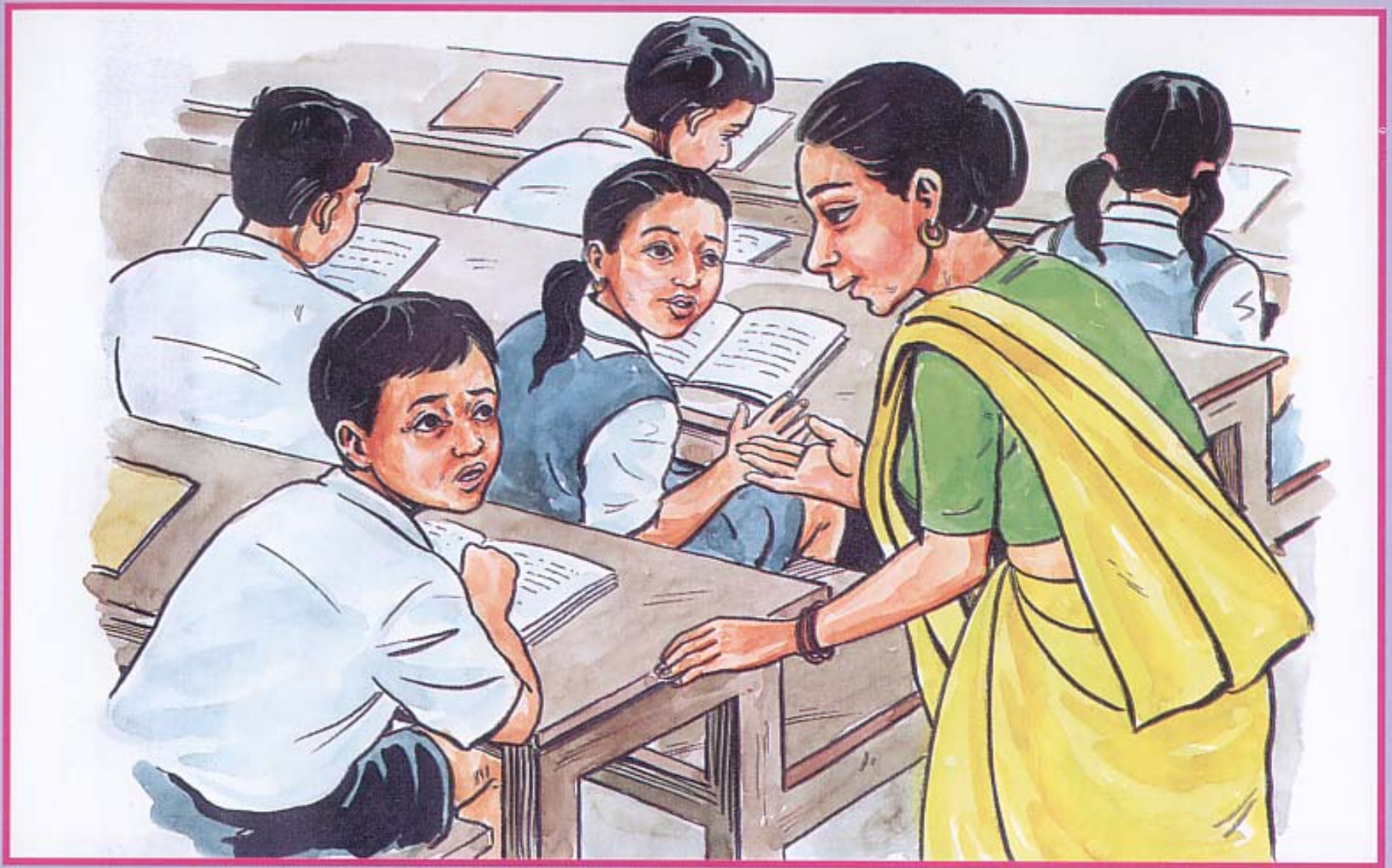
Shyam lived with his parents, his small sister, and his grandmother in a village. Both his father and his grandmother were blind. When Shyam was a child, his father used to do many of the household chores. But ever since his father became blind, Shyam has to help his mother with the housework. He did not even have enough time to study. As soon as he woke up, he started doing his household work without even washing his face. Then he had to run to school.





The villagers used to say that Shyam's father and grandmother had gone blind due to God's curse. Over the past few days, Shyam's mother had started complaining that her eyes were itchy and painful and felt as if there was an insect in her eyes. Shyam was worried thinking why he had to face so many problems.





Shyam was very weak in his studies. None of his friends wanted to sit next to him or talk with him and play with him. Everyone used to say that he was a dirty boy. One day a new teacher came to teach in his class. She asked him why he was sitting alone at the back. Shyam replied that nobody would sit with him. The teacher went close to where Shyam was sitting.





She looked at Shyam's face. She saw discharge on his eyes and nose. She asked him, "Shyam, didn't you wash your face today?" Shyam replied, "No, I didn't. Nobody in my family washes his or her face, teacher." The teacher said, "Shyam, there is discharge on your nose and eyes because you did not wash your face. Flies are attracted to that discharge and that is why your friends say that you are dirty and do not want to sit with you." Shyam looked at all his friends. Everyone's face looked very clean.





The teacher said to Shyam, "When you do not wash your face, flies will be attracted to your eyes and nose. Flies carry the germs of diseases from one person to another. An eye disease called trachoma is also transmitted by flies. When a person has trachoma, a person may have red, itchy, painful eyes. If symptoms like these are seen, you should go to the Health Post immediately. Otherwise this disease, can make a person go blind. Therefore, you should wash your face with clean water at least twice a day. And, when you wash your face, you should be careful to clean the discharge from your nose and eyes."





Shyam was surprised when the teacher told him all these things. The teacher noticed that suddenly Shyam looked very happy and she asked him, "Shyam why do you look so happy?" Shyam asked, "Teacher, can I go home? Since many days, my mother has been complaining of having red, itchy, painful eyes. I will not let her go blind. I will take her to the health post immediately."





Shyam went on to say, "Nobody in my family washes his/her face. Now, I will go home and tell everyone to wash their face twice a day. From today onwards, all of us will start washing our face. Teacher, it wasn't true that my father and grandma had gone blind due to a curse from God. They had gone blind due to trachoma. Now I am beginning to understand all this." Saying this, Shyam ran home. He took his mother to the Health Post.





These days Shyam washes his face everyday and he looks very clean. Now you can see his friends around him instead of flies! He also studies hard and he does not have to worry that his mom will go blind.



**Exercise:**

Write the answers of the following questions in the space provided:

1. Why didn't Shaym's friends like to sit with him?

2. Why was Shyam worried?

3. What is the benefit of washing the face?

4. Is it really true that people become blind due to *God's* curse?

Note:

- Go to the tap and wash your hands and face properly. Wash your hands and face twice a day everyday.
- Go home and help your younger siblings to wash their face twice a day. Tell all your family members, friends and neighbours why it is important to wash the face everyday.

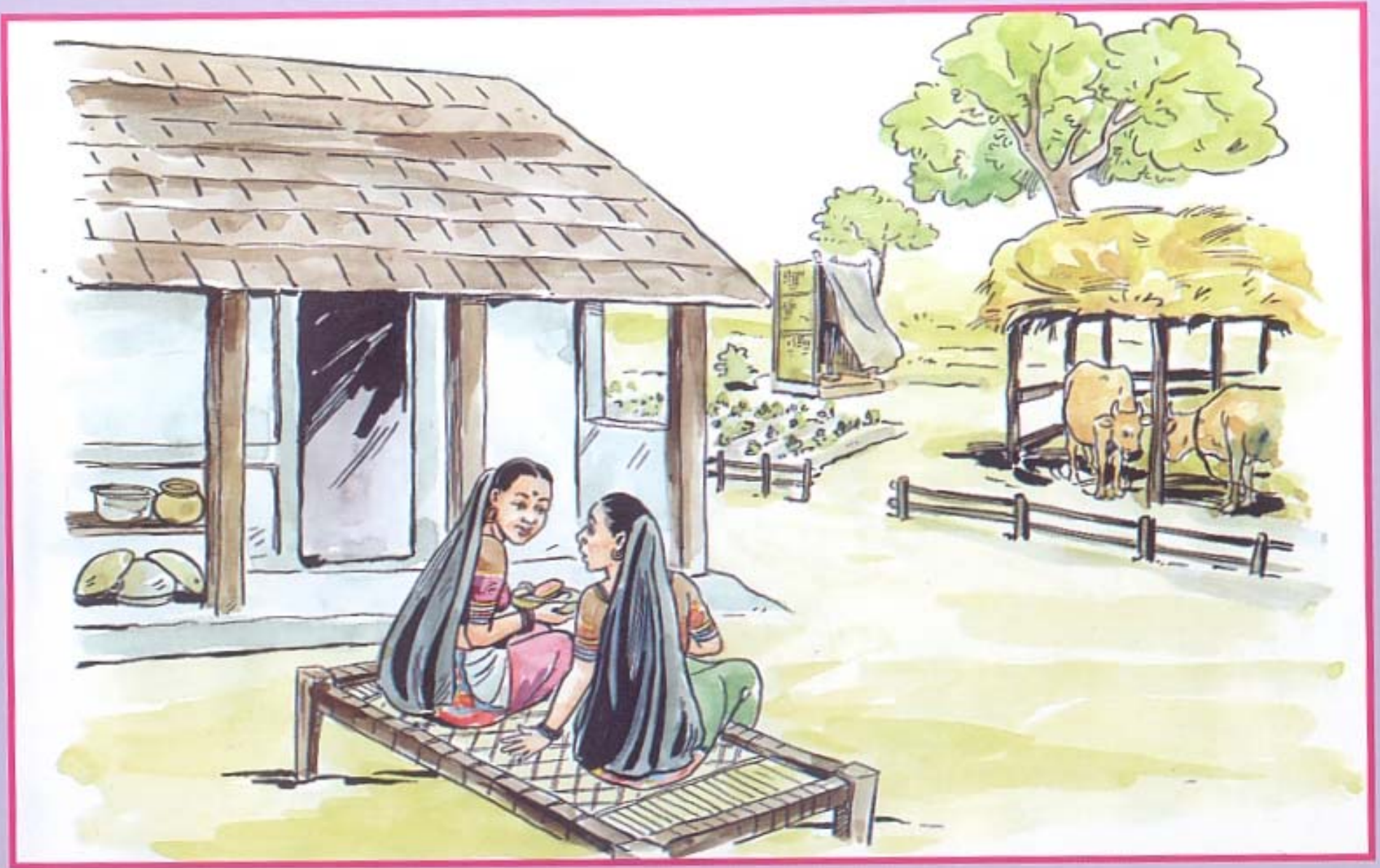


## Clean Environment, Healthy People



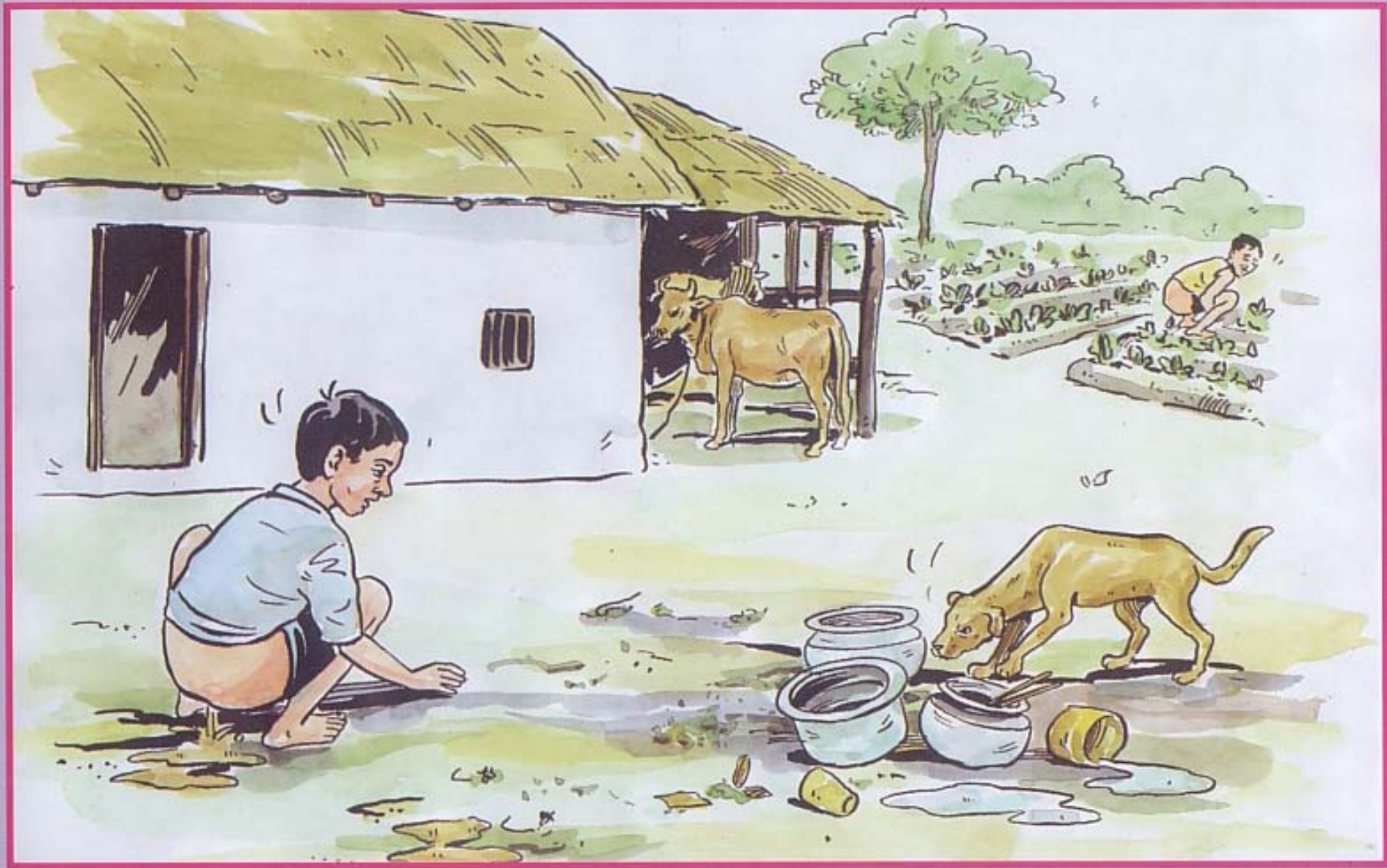
Parwati and Rupa were childhood friends. They had grown up in the same village Belawati and had gone to the same school. But after getting married, Rupa went to live in a village called Melapur. Parwati had also got married, but she still lived in the same village Belawati. Parwati missed Rupa a lot. One day she went to visit Rupa in Melapur.





Rupa was delighted to see Parwati. But she noticed that Parwati did not look as cheerful as she used to be. The two friends sat down and chatted. Parwati saw that Rupa's house was very clean and there were no flies around. She thought of her own house.





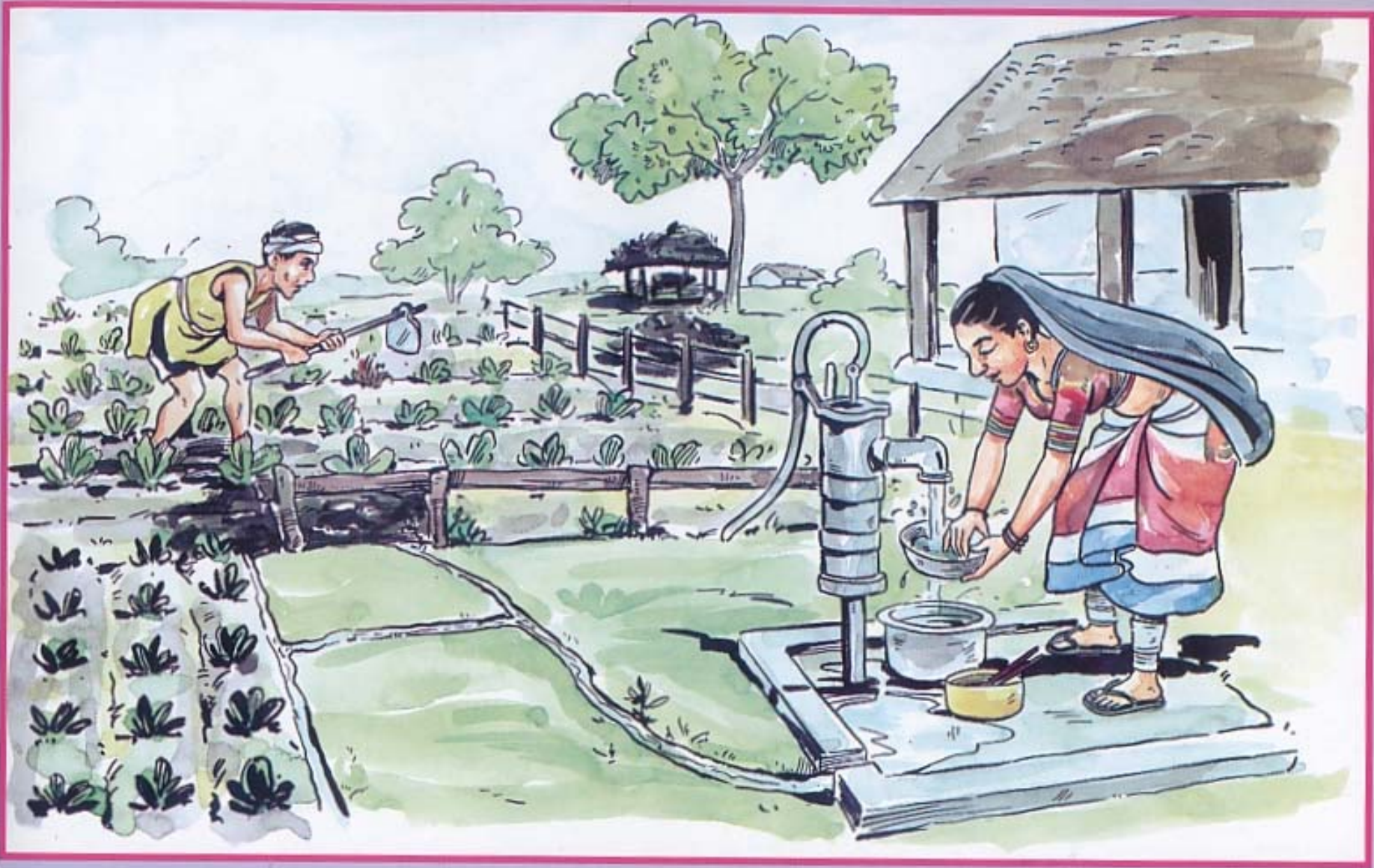
There were flies all over her house. They did not even have a latrine. The Village Health Worker had told them many times to build a pit latrine. But Parwati and her husband thought that a pit latrine would have a bad smell. All the adults went to the field to defecate and the children defecated in the courtyard. The animal shed was built next to the house and dirty water pools were always around.





She asked Rupa, "Rupa how do you manage to keep away the flies? I can never make them go away from my house." Rupa said, "The only way of keeping away flies is to keep your environment clean. I try to keep my house and environment as clean as possible." Parwati asked, "How do you manage to do that?" Rupa replied, "Well! I sweep my house and courtyard everyday. Everyone in my family uses a latrine. We keep our latrine clean so that it will not smell."





"We keep the animals in a shed which, we have built a little away from the house. We keep the animal excreta in a pit, which we later use as fertilizer in the fields. This way, we not only have good crops but we also manage to keep our house and environment clean." Parwati looked around and saw that certainly Rupa's house was clean. There were no dirty pools of water around. The waste-water from the kitchen and from the tap was used for the kitchen garden. There were trees planted around the house.





Just then Rupa's son Rahul came back from the school. He greeted Parwati saying "Namaste Auntie". Parwati said, "Namaste Rahul". Parwati noticed that Rahul's face was very clean. He did not have discharge on his eyes and nose. She compared him to her own son Ramesh, who always had itchy eyes and runny nose. Rupa's children had eye infection. She mentioned to Parwati that she had tried all the herbal medicine but their eye infection did not go away. She said that she was very worried about the children's eye infection.





Rupa said, "Parwati, You should take your children to the Health Post immediately. I have heard that this eye infection can make a person go blind." Parwati was frightened and said, "Rupa I will certainly take my children to the Health Post tomorrow."





Rupa explained that when the environment is dirty, a lot of flies come and these flies spread eye infections. She told Parwati that we should keep our house and environment clean. Parwati understood many things now. She said to Rupa, "From now onwards, I will also keep my house and environment clean. We will build and use a latrine and we will keep it clean."







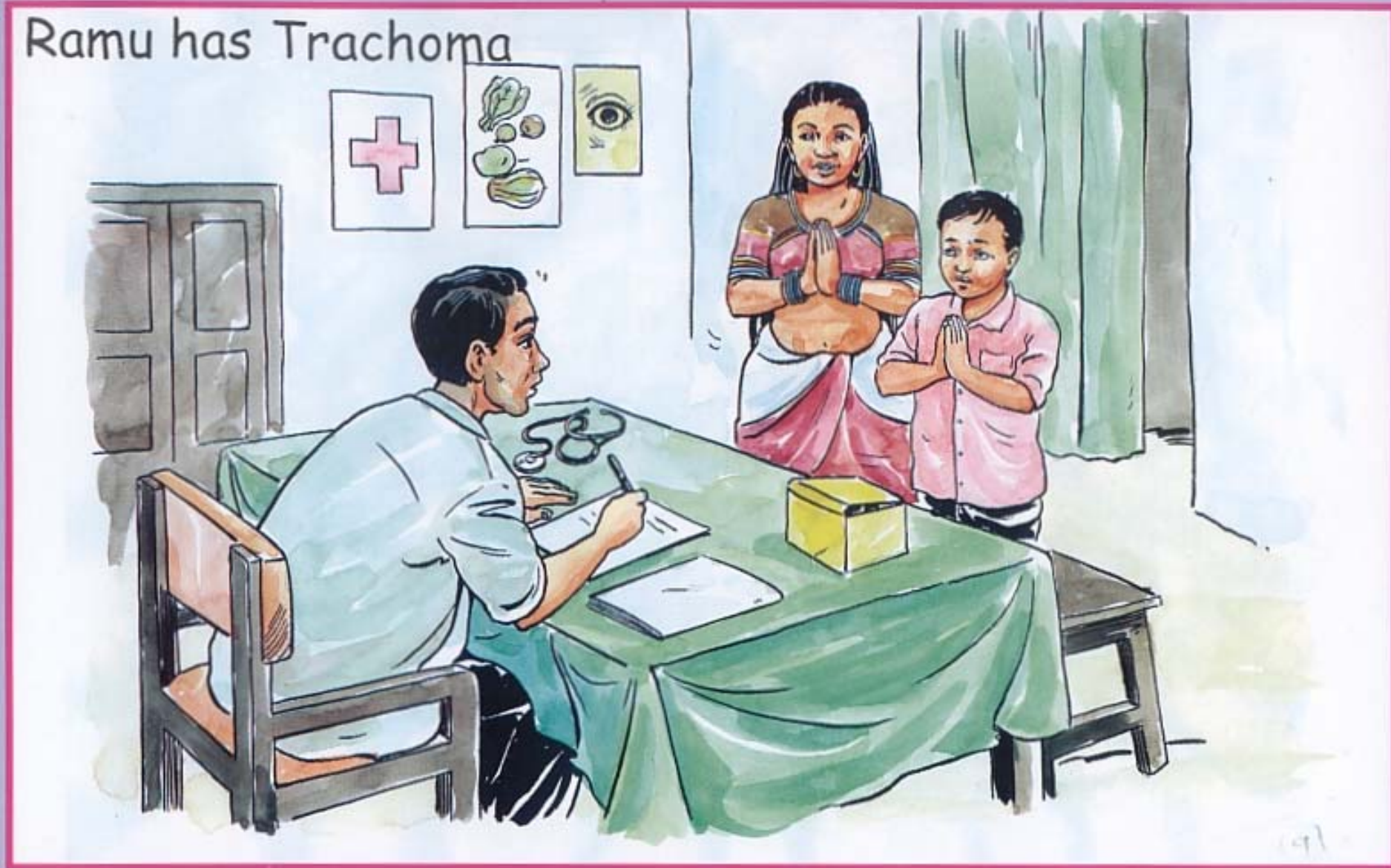
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Draw a picture showing a clean environment in the first box and a picture showing a dirty environment in the second box provided below.

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*Note: Clean your classroom each week and clean the school once in two weeks.  
Help your parents to keep your house clean.*

## Ramu has Trachoma



*Mother:* Namaste Doctor!

*Doctor:* Namaste! Namaste!

*Mother:* Doctor, my son has had painful eyes for many days. Can you please examine his eyes?

*Doctor:* Tell me some of the symptoms you have, Ramu.





**Ramu:** I have painful, red and itchy eyes and I have discharge from my eyes all the time.

**Doctor:** Did you have this problem before?

**Ramu:** Yes doctor, I have had this kind of problem a couple of times. But my mother used to heat the oil and apply it to my eyes.





**Doctor:** Did that help?

**Mother:** No, it did not. Then I took him to the *Guruwa*. *Guruwa* put some ash on his forehead and chanted *mantra*. He told us to come after a few days. But Ramu's eyes were not cured even after this.



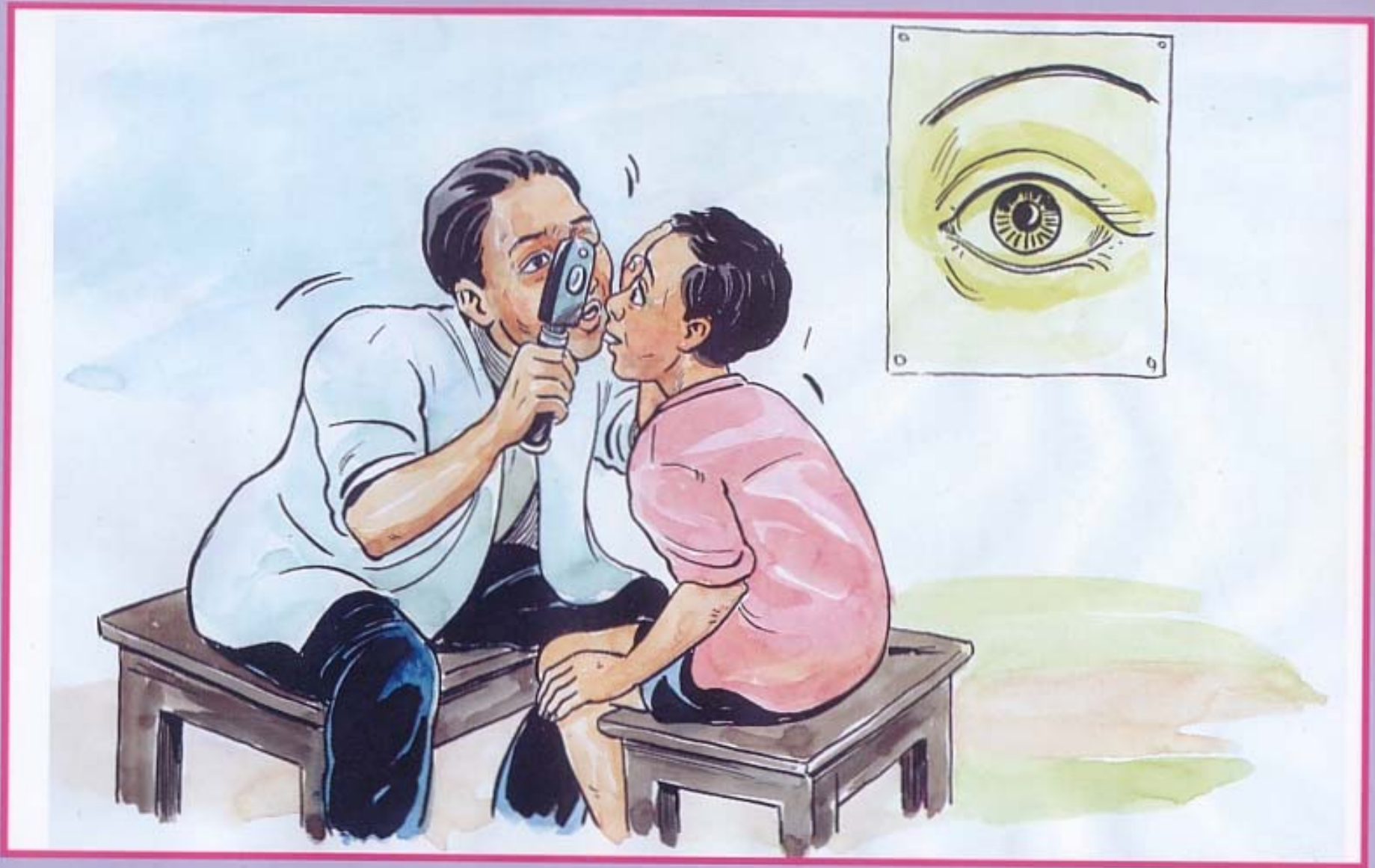


**Doctor:** Did you take him to the *Guruwa* again?

**Mother:** Yes, I did take him there again. But the *Guruwa* then told me to take him to the Health Post once. That is why we came here.

**Doctor:** The *Guruwa* did the right thing by sending you here. You should never apply things like herbs or oil in the eyes.





**Doctor:** Ramu, let me examine your eyes. Oh! you have trachoma in your eyes, Ramu.

**Ramu:** Trachoma? What is trachoma doctor?

**Doctor:** Trachoma is a transmittable eye disease. When you have repeated eye infections, the eyelids start to turn inwards. This condition is called *ulta badhani* or *parewawar*. The eyelashes rub against the cornea and if it is not cured on time, a person can go blind.





**Ramu:** Oh no! Do you mean to say that if I have eye infections like this many times, I will go blind? What should I do now Doctor?

**Doctor:** I will give you this eye ointment. It is called tetracycline. You should apply it in your eyes twice daily for six weeks. But be careful about how to apply it. You should apply it inside the eyes. *(The doctor shows how to apply the ointment).*

**Ramu:** Yes, I will do that Doctor.





**Doctor:** Ramu, after applying the ointment in the eyes, your vision may be blurred for a few moments. But you should continue using the ointment for full six weeks. Otherwise the infection may re-occur. Ramu, you have to understand that the ointment alone will not cure the disease completely. You have to wash your face at least twice daily with clean water. When you wash your face, take care to remove the discharge from your eyes and nose.





Ramu: I will certainly do as you have told me. I do not want to lose my eyesight! I will tell all my friends who have eye infection to come to you to have their eyes examined. Thank you very much, doctor.

Doctor: I am glad you came to the Health Post Ramu. Wash your face two times daily and use the ointment twice daily for six weeks.

Ramu: I will doctor! Namaste!

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