

Satya Bharti Abhiyan Gives Boost to Sanitation in Rural Punjab

Over 5000 toilets constructed in households across 210 villages in Ludhiana District

Over 25,000 individuals benefiting from the initiative

Plans to cover all villages (over 900) across Ludhiana District over the next two years

New Delhi, August 13, 2015: Bharti Foundation's 'Satya Bharti Abhiyan' initiative, which is aimed at improving rural household sanitation, today said that it has constructed and handed over 5000 Individual House Hold Latrines (IHHL) free of cost in 210 villages across District Ludhiana (Punjab). In addition, more than 1500 toilets are currently under construction in 64 additional villages.

The initiative, which was launched in August 2014 to contribute to Government of India's National Mission of 'Swachh Bharat' has, so far, benefitted over 25,000 people through the construction of IHHL. Bharti Foundation aims to cover over 900 villages across Ludhiana District under the initiative and construct toilets free of cost in all households lacking such facilities. At the end of this program Ludhiana District will be left with no household without a toilet. The Foundation has committed an investment of up to Rs 100 crores for the initiative. The initiative is being supported by Bharti Airtel Limited and Bharti Infratel Limited.

In addition to rural household sanitation, the 'Satya Bharti Abhiyan' is also constructing toilets to improve sanitation facilities in Government schools in rural Ludhiana by building toilets for girls, wherever no such facility exists. Apart from providing sanitation facilities, the Foundation is also focused on bringing about a behavioral change through various sanitation campaigns spread over six states in India. Through this campaign over 41,000 children studying in 254 schools run by the Foundation have worked as agents of change to bring awareness amongst the local population.

Rakesh Bharti Mittal, Co-Chairman, Bharti Foundation, said, "We are pleased to report the rapid progress the initiative is making and in particular the strong support it has received from the rural communities. The benefits and impact on the quality of life through this project are clearly visible on the ground. We remain fully committed to the program and are confident that within the next two years every rural household without a toilet in the district will be provided with one. In addition, we plan to provide separate toilet for girls in those Government schools across the District and make sure that the lack of this basic amenity is not a barrier for educating the girl child."

The Foundation has engaged multiple partners to construct the toilets that will be durable and will require low maintenance. The Satya Bharti Abhiyan is being implemented in collaboration with State Government and local communities.

About Bharti Foundation:

Bharti Foundation provides free education to underprivileged children in rural areas. Its Programs (Satya Bharti Schools, Satya Bharti Learning Centres, Quality Support Program) presently reach out to over 58,000 children from socially and economically challenged backgrounds, with special focus on the girl child. Presently, around 50% of the students in these schools are girls. The flagship Satya Bharti School Program offers free quality education through 254 (Primary, Elementary and Senior Secondary) Schools and employs over 1600 teachers from the local community. These schools provide free mid-day meals, books and uniforms to all the children. As an organization, Bharti Foundation has always been conscious of the importance of promoting the cause of public hygiene and accordingly provides for separate toilet facilities for boys and girls in its schools, which in turn has proved to be a major factor driving girl child enrolment.