

Bharti Foundation appoints Sulabh for construction of toilets under the ‘Satya Bharti Abhiyan’

Sulabh to construct 12,000 toilets across Ludhiana district in the first phase of the initiative

‘Satya Bharti Abhiyan’ aimed at improving rural household sanitation facilities

New Delhi, December 1, 2014: Bharti Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sulabh International (“Sulabh”) for construction of toilets in rural households across District Ludhiana (Punjab) under the ‘Satya Bharti Abhiyan’. As part of the MoU, Sulabh will construct 12,000 toilets in households lacking basic sanitation facilities across District Ludhiana under the first phase of the ‘Satya Bharti Abhiyan’.

Bharti Foundation announced the ‘Satya Bharti Abhiyan’ earlier this year with the aim to improve rural household sanitation facilities in the State of Punjab. As part of this initiative, Bharti Foundation has adopted the Ludhiana District and committed an investment of INR 100 crores over the next three years for constructing toilets in rural households lacking such facilities in 915 villages across the District. In addition to rural household sanitation, the ‘Satya Bharti Abhiyan’ will also invest in improving sanitation facilities in Government schools in rural Ludhiana by building new toilets for girls, where no such facilities exist.

Sulabh is an India-based social service organization that works to promote human rights, environmental sanitation, non-conventional sources of energy, waste management and social reforms through education. Sulabh International is the largest nonprofit organization in India.

As per the MoU, Sulabh will also conduct a survey of the target villages to identify beneficiaries, undertake construction of individual household toilets and carry out Information Education Campaigns over the next 12 months.

Commenting on the agreement, **Mr. Rakesh Bharti Mittal, Co-Chairman, Bharti Foundation, said,** “We are pleased to announce this partnership with Sulabh to roll out the first phase of the ‘Satya Bharti Abhiyan’. Sulabh has been a pioneer in providing sanitation solutions to the poor in India and we are confident that their expertise in this area will add immense value to this initiative. Sanitation for all is a big priority for the country and Bharti Foundation hopes to contribute towards the cause in a meaningful way through this initiative.”

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 52,000 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 approximately 1800 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.

To take forward the Hon'ble Prime Minister's call for 'Swachh Bharat', on the occasion of Children's Day, the students of Satya Bharti School launched the 'Sanitation Week' across all 254 Satya Bharti Schools in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

The week-long awareness initiative led by students, teachers and community members staged rallies and enacted skits in support of Clean Community Campaign and pledged commitment of efforts to create a cleaner India.

Annexure:

Sanitation and economic growth:

- *Today India leads the world in open defecation, with about 600 million defecating in the open every day accounting for about 60% of open defecation in the world.*
- *Less than 1% of people in China, 4% of people in Bangladesh, and about a quarter of people in Sub-Saharan Africa defecate in the open.*
- *Good Sanitation could boost annual per capita income by Rs 6000 a year.*
- *Lack of sanitation is costing India 6.4% of GDP because income is lost to medical expenses and productivity is lower.*

(Source: WHO & UNICEF Progress on Drinking Water & Sanitation)

- *Government outlay upscaled: Rs 1,96,000 cr by 2019 (Rs 1,34,000 cr –Rural; Rs 62,000 cr – Urban); to construct 12 cr toilets by 2019; each of the 6.5 lakh panchayats to receive Rs 20 lakh every year.*