

SWACHHATA SAMACHAR

Volume 4 | Issue 27



Rural WASH
WhatsApp
Channel
Launched

From the **Union Minister**

March is a time when we celebrate women across the world—but in the Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission, we have celebrated and empowered women from the very beginning. Women have not only been the foremost beneficiaries but also the fiercest champions of WASH in rural India. From leading sanitation drives to ensuring safe water at the doorstep, their leadership has transformed outcomes and inspired communities. As we mark this special month, we continue and reconfirm our commitment of placing women at the heart of our efforts—because when women lead, progress is sustained.



Sh. C. R. Patil

Union Minister, Ministry of Jal Shakti

From the **Union Minister of State**

Women are the primary custodians of water and sanitation in every household. Through both the transformative missions of Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission, we are building sustainable systems that go beyond access, towards 'Sampoorna Swachhata'. Community-led efforts, particularly the involvement of Self-Help Groups in operation and maintenance, are critical in ensuring that these gains are sustained and owned by the people.



Sh. V. Somanna

Union Minister of State, Ministry of Jal Shakti



From the **Secretary's Desk**

Creating an enabling environment means ensuring that change is not just encouraged but led from the front by communities, with women-led SHGs at the forefront of operations and maintenance. As we work to sustain the gains of our water and sanitation infrastructure, effective O&M is critical. Persistent challenges like water quality, greywater reuse, and non-biodegradable waste demand proactive inter-departmental convergence and a culture of shared learning. State Water and Sanitation Missions (SWSMs) must continue to play a pivotal role in facilitating this shift by strengthening community capacity, driving convergence, and embedding long-term sustainability into local systems.



Shri Ashok Kumar Kaluaram Meena

Secretary, DDWS, Ministry of Jal Shakti

From the **Mission Director's Desk**

In the journey of SBM-G Phase II, India has transformed remarkably—from bearing 60% of Asia's open defecation burden in 2014 to achieving ODF status in 2019. Today, nearly 76% of our 5.87 lakh villages are ODF Plus Model, and this progress is both encouraging and inspiring. The road ahead must focus on ensuring that all villages achieve verified ODF Plus Model status. To make this a reality, a true Jan Andolan is essential and is anchored in community ownership and led by empowered women. Sustainability goes beyond infrastructure; it means addressing emerging priorities such as faecal sludge management, menstrual hygiene, and continuous use of sanitation facilities in schools, anganwadis, and health centers. Our approach must continue to integrate climate resilience and youth engagement, so that Swachhata becomes a way of life for generations to come.



Shri Jitendra Srivastava

*Joint Secretary & Mission Director (SBM-G),
DDWS, Ministry of Jal Shakti*



Programme Highlights

As on 27th March, 2025

ODF
PLUS

- Over **4.47 lakh (Over 95.97%)** of India's inhabited villages have declared themselves ODF Plus Model
- Over **5.05 lakh** villages have arrangements for solid waste management
- Over **5.22 lakh** Villages have arrangements for liquid waste management
- Over **1,821 Rural** Plastic Waste Management Units set up, covering more than **4,713 blocks**
- Over **1,210** Biogas plants registered
- Over **895** Functional Biogas plants
- **77** Completed Biogas plants
- More than **6.13 lakh vehicles** for door-to door waste collection & transportation



Pakhwada Activities: March, 2025



Ministry of Textile

- A session was organized on personal hygiene and community health that was facilitated by a doctor, followed by a free medical checkup organized for female employees at the NIFT Campus.
- A competition on focused on making the best from waste was held at NIFT Campus in New Delhi.
- A debate competition was on the topic, 'plastic ban a solution to cleanliness or a step backward' was organised.
- Celebration of International Women's Day at Cotton Corporation of India Office, Maharashtra.
- Essay Competition on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and its influence on promoting clean workspace.
- Jute Mills organized Swachhata Pakhwada under the theme of Swachhata Mein Jan Bhagidaari





Ministry of Steel

- Walkathon held with employees and Safai Mitras to raise community awareness.
- Tree plantation drive conducted at New Town, Kolkata.
- Swachhata-themed skit performed at MSTC Head Office.
- Drawing competition held at a local primary school.
- Cloth bags distributed to promote alternatives to single-use plastic.
- Cleaning drives planned for ponds, wells, and hand-pumps in mining areas.
- Art competition organized for children of MSTC employees.
- Thematic wall paintings planned near public toilets and offices.
- Senior officials held direct interactions with Safai Mitras to understand their challenges.





Ministry of Jal Shakti

- A selfie point was set up, that witnessed enthusiastic participation by NIH staff
- Cleanliness activities were carried out at the park near the National Water Development Agency headquarters.
- A cleanliness oath was administered to all staff and officers on World Water Day. A public awareness rally on water conservation was conducted by the regional engineering office (South).
- A panel discussion on glacier conservation was organized by WAPCOS.
- NERIWALM employees participated in a cleanliness pledge and undertook a cleaning drive at the electrical sub-station on campus.
- A cleanliness drive was organized at the Hampi powerhouse and dam area.
- Swachhata banners and posters were placed at NWDA offices, followed by a talk on cleanliness that was delivered by the office head.





Ministry of Women and Child Development

- Nutri-kitchen gardens developed; flowerpots cleaned and maintained by staff and children at Mrinaljyoti Jyotiniwas.
- Cleanliness awareness sessions held at Child Home, Guntur, highlighting government focus on health and hygiene.
- Masks, sanitizers, soaps distributed and regular usage encouraged among children.
- Hygiene activities like nail trimming, hand washing, and wardrobe cleaning conducted at Little Wood Girls Home, Mizoram.
- Indoor/outdoor cleaning, handwashing, nail cutting, haircuts, and painting activities undertaken during the campaign.
- Webinar, workshop, film show, and poem competition on health and sanitation organized at the Little Wood Girls Home Khawzawl, Mizoram.
- Running water ensured in toilets, wash basins, and kitchen; soap provided at all points with regular sanitization of frequently touched surfaces maintained.



The Rural WASH WhatsApp Channel



The Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBMG) and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) have launched the Rural WASH WhatsApp Channel in March, an initiative aimed at enhancing communication and engagement in rural water and sanitation efforts. As one of its first steps, the channel highlighted the stories of women driving change in rural WASH across states and UTs—women who wear many hats, from implementing sanitation schemes to ensuring safe water access and mobilizing communities for better hygiene practices.

These grassroots champions have not only worked tirelessly to make these programs successful but have also become the voice of change within their communities. Whether as sanitation workers, water committee leaders, or health advocates, they have played a critical role in making clean water and sanitation a reality in rural India.

The Rural WASH WhatsApp Channel is designed to be a direct, interactive platform for sharing key updates, success stories, and best practices from the ground among others. It will serve as an additional communication mechanism, ensuring that departmental highlights,

innovative practices, and important information reach stakeholders efficiently.

As this initiative grows, it will continue to spotlight those who make a difference while strengthening the flow of information to enhance rural sanitation and water management efforts.

Stay tuned for more updates and join us in celebrating the relentless efforts of these changemakers.

Scan to join the Rural WhatsApp Channel:



Elabati Rabha: The Woman Championing Cleanliness in Ujan Rabhapara, Assam



action, Elabati Rabha has mobilized the entire village to maintain cleanliness. Every Sunday, at least one member from each household participates in a village-wide cleaning drive. To ensure accountability, a nominal **fine of ₹50 is imposed on those who fail to join**, a move that has fostered discipline and strengthened community participation. The initiative extends beyond just cleaning roads and drains—it encompasses social spaces, tourist spots, and even the preservation of the village's natural beauty.

Elabati Rabha's unwavering dedication has turned Ujan Rabhapara into a model Swachh village. Her leadership proves that **when women take charge, entire communities thrive**. With a clear vision, she and her team aspire to make their village the cleanest in the district. Their efforts, rooted in innovation and collective responsibility, are not just about maintaining cleanliness but about fostering a sustainable and eco-conscious future.

[To read more, click here](#)



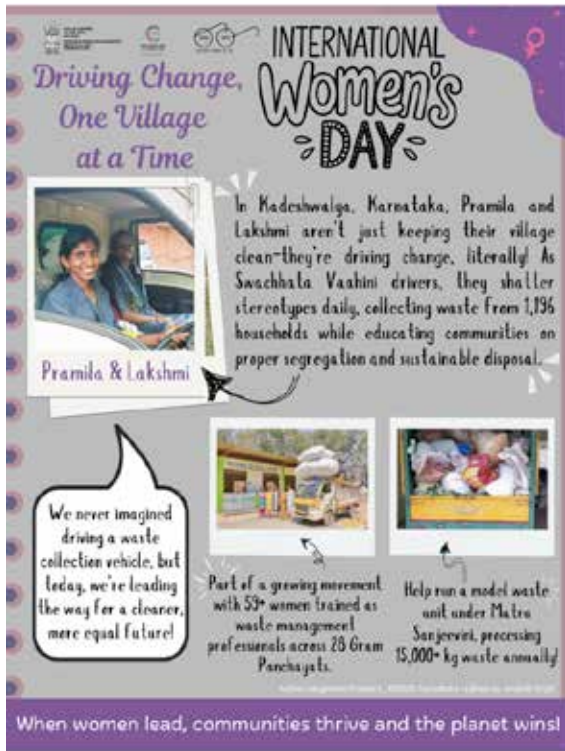
Nestled in the lush greenery of Assam's Bongaigaon district, Ujan Rabhapara is more than just a scenic village—it is a beacon of cleanliness and sustainability. Home to the endangered Golden Langurs, this village under Kakoijana Gaon Panchayat has emerged as a shining example of community-led environmental conservation. At the heart of this transformation is **Elabati Rabha**, the dynamic president of the local women's group, whose leadership has redefined the village's approach to sanitation and waste management.

A Community United for Swachhata

Recognizing the importance of collective



Kadeshwalya: Women Driving Change Through Waste Management



Kadeshwalya's success is powered by the **Matru Sanjeevani Okkoota**, a self-help group managing a model **waste processing unit**, handling **15,000+ kg of waste annually**. With 25 SHGs under its umbrella, the initiative provides financial independence, skill development, and social recognition to women. With over **59 women trained as waste professionals across 28 Gram Panchayats**, Kadeshwalya is inspiring villages statewide.

[To read more, click here](#) ➔

In Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, Kadeshwalya Gram Panchayat is setting a remarkable example in sanitation and women empowerment. Through the **Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)**, the village has revolutionized waste management while creating new opportunities for women.

Pramila and Lakshmi, two determined women, have broken gender stereotypes by becoming **Swachhata Vaahini drivers**. Collecting waste from **1,196 households**, they don't just drive; they educate their community on waste segregation and sustainable disposal.



Inspiring Change One Household at a Time: Poornima Devi's Sanitation Waste Collection Story



With the help of 2 Swachhta Didis, Poornima visits approximately **250–300 households each day, collecting 20–30 kgs of dry waste** such as plastic bottles, packaging, and recyclables. She tirelessly drives her **Tricycle-rickshaw across a 9.2 km route**, ensuring the collected waste reaches the Barwe panchayat collection center for further processing. The collection from each village is done once a week. The collection in Barwe Panchayat started from October 2024. Till November 2024, around 749 Kgs of dry & plastic waste has been collected Barwe, Dahu, and Harchanda and transferred to MRF for further processing.

[To read more, click here](#)



Poornima Devi aged 20, lives in Ranchi, Jharkhand. In order to support her husband in sanitation initiatives & being a member of Self-Help Group (SHG), she joined as **Safai Mitra** for collecting of waste from households to Barwe panchayat collection centre. The waste collected by her & other safai mitras are then transported at **the Material Recovery Facility (MRF)**, Ranchi developed in **partnership with District Rural Development Authority, Zila Parishad, Ranchi, HDFC Bank and Centre for Environment Education.**



A Green Crusader Transforming Waste into Change



Pandurang Ghate, she transformed her kitchen waste into nutrient-rich compost. Starting small, she constructed a vermicomposting pit with careful layering—coconut husk, sand, cow dung, and specialized earthworms—all working together to decompose organic waste efficiently. This initiative not only reduced landfill contributions but also nurtured a thriving home garden, proving that waste can indeed be turned into wealth.

Beyond her home, Mrs. Kavalekar became a vocal advocate for waste segregation, composting, and plastic waste recycling. She actively educated local communities, leading awareness programs in schools and self-help groups to instill responsible waste management habits. Her commitment to sustainability extended to public clean-up drives, temple pond restorations, and even marketplace interventions—encouraging vendors and shoppers alike to switch from plastic to cloth bags.

[To read more, click here](#) 

In the heart of Ponda, Goa, a remarkable woman has been leading a silent revolution in environmental sustainability for over two decades. Mrs. Sushanti Kavalekar, a passionate environmentalist, has turned waste into a resource and inspired an entire community to adopt eco-friendly practices. Her journey, rooted in personal responsibility and a vision for a cleaner future, is a testament to how one individual's actions can spark widespread change.

Mrs. Kavalekar's tryst with sustainability began at home, where she experimented with vermicomposting. With guidance from local expert Shri



The Story of Deepshikha SHG in Assam: Transforming Waste into Wealth



Seven years ago, in the Bhojo Gram Panchayat of Assam, a group of ten determined women came together to address a pressing issue in their village: inadequate waste management. Under the leadership of Lolita Tasa Mali, these women formed the Deepshikha Self-Help Group (SHG) and embarked on a journey to transform their community, turning waste into wealth while empowering themselves economically and socially.

The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Nazira Division, along with the Charaideo District

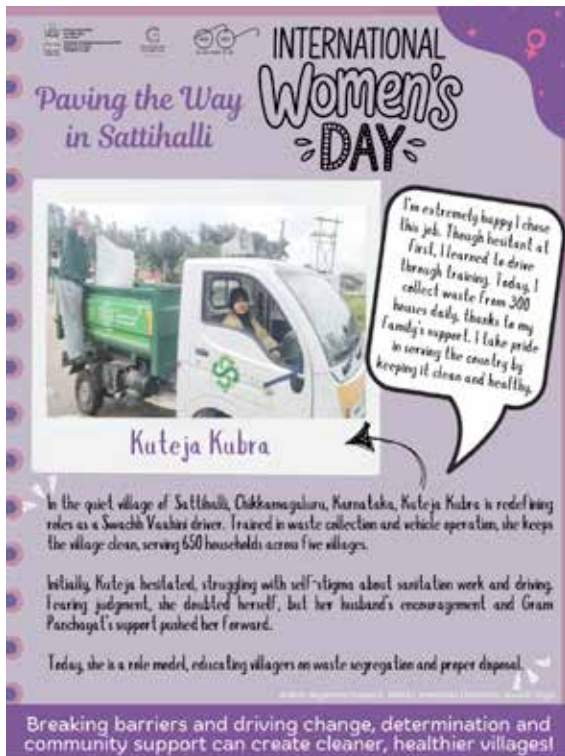
administration, played a crucial role in supporting their initiative. One of the key milestones in their journey was the establishment of a Material Collection Facility (MCF). This center became the heart of the village's solid waste management, enabling the systematic collection, segregation, and recycling of waste.

With 40 households generating 29.6 kg of waste daily (0.74 kg per home), the SHG took up the responsibility of waste collection and disposal. They utilized tricycles to collect waste from households, businesses, and public areas, including the Bhojo Market and Bhojo railway station. The waste collected included plastic bags, wrappers, bottles, batteries, medical waste, and aluminum foil. The facility not only helped in waste processing but also served as an educational hub, raising awareness about waste segregation, recycling, and safe disposal practices.

[To read more, click here](#)



Women Driving Change: Kuteja Kubra's Journey in Rural Sanitation



waste collection efficiently.

Today, Kuteja is much more than a driver—she is a **community educator**, spreading awareness on waste segregation and sustainable waste management. Every day, she **collects waste from 300 houses**, helping maintain a healthier environment. Her story is a testament to how **women's empowerment and sanitation go hand in hand**.

To read more, click here [➤](#)

In the serene village of Sattihalli, Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka, Kuteja Kubra is breaking barriers as a **Swachh Vaahini** driver, proving that determination and support can transform lives. She serves **650 households across five villages**, ensuring cleanliness through waste collection and disposal.

Initially, Kuteja was hesitant. The idea of sanitation work and driving a collection vehicle carried societal stigma, and she feared judgment. However, with her **husband's encouragement** and the unwavering **support of the Gram Panchayat**, she took on the challenge. Learning to drive was a turning point, equipping her with the skills to manage



Transforming Jotsoma: A Journey to ODF Plus Model Village



Swachhata Champion. Her relentless efforts in community mobilization and sanitation awareness have earned her recognition, including an invitation to witness the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on January 26, 2024. Ms. Rino and the WATSAN committee spread sanitation messages through house-to-house campaigns, interpersonal communication (IPC), and poster drives. Their efforts have ensured that sanitation remains a shared responsibility and a source of community pride.

During Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) 2024, Ms. Rino's dedication went beyond her village. She actively participated in CTU cleaning in Kisama village, led highway cleaning initiatives, and collaborated seamlessly with officials. Ms. Mhasivino Rino's journey exemplifies the power of grassroots leadership. Through unwavering dedication, she has helped transform Jotsoma into a model village, proving that collective action and community spirit are pillars to pave the way ahead.

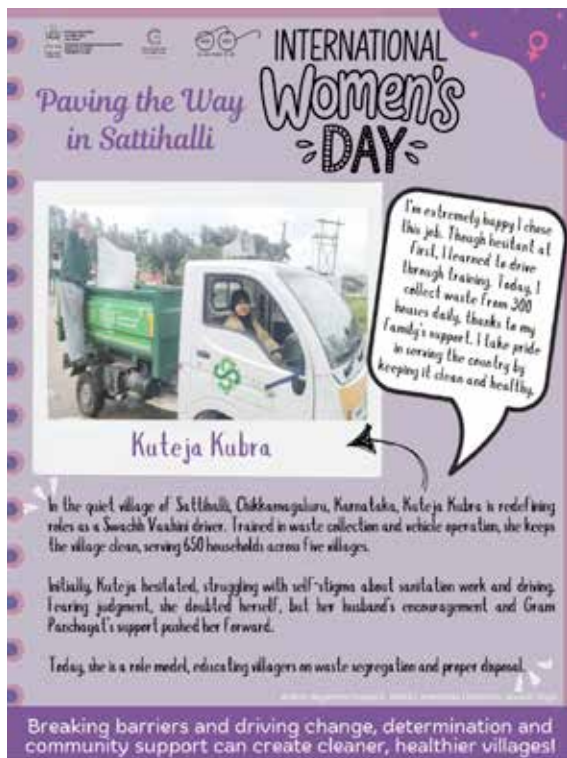
[To read more, click here](#) >

In the serene hills of Nagaland, Jotsoma village in Kohima district stands as a beacon of sustainable sanitation and community-driven transformation. Home to 3,863 residents, this Angami Naga settlement, located just 7 km from Kohima, has evolved into an Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus Model Village through sheer determination and collective effort.

Jotsoma was declared ODF on October 2, 2019, under the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen. At the heart of Jotsoma's transformation is Ms. Mhasivino Rino, a 32-year-old Swachhagrahi and



Monika Minz: Transforming Lives Through Sanitation in Kacharu, Odisha



In the quiet village of Kacharu, Odisha, Monika Minz isn't just collecting waste—she's transforming lives. As a Swachhta Sathi in the Kuarmunda block of Sundargarh district, Monika works tirelessly to ensure clean surroundings, waste segregation, and community empowerment across six villages under her Gram Panchayat. Through her efforts, she has redefined sanitation work, breaking societal stigmas and inspiring a positive shift in community perceptions. Each morning, Monika begins her day cycling through villages, collecting dry waste from 1,200 households across Rampur, Silajore, Sandalaki, Pasara, Bijubandh, and her own village, Kacharu. Her dedication ensures that every

household participates in proper waste disposal, turning sanitation into a community-led effort.

The journey began in 2021 with the launch of the "Aama Sundargarh Swachh Sundargarh" initiative by the district administration, with support from UNICEF. This initiative aimed to manage non-biodegradable waste sustainably while creating livelihoods for women in Self-Help Groups (SHGs). However, when Monika's SHG was approached, all ten members initially backed out due to the stigma attached to sanitation work.

Through persistence, Monika and fellow Swachhta Sathi Lalita Torei convinced the community to adopt responsible waste disposal practices. Today, they have successfully managed 7.5 metric tons of solid waste, earning accolades from the Government of Odisha. Kacharu Gram Panchayat was recognized as the best in solid waste management across the state.

[To read more, click here](#) 



Shushum Lata- Driving Change in Rural Bihar



In Dawa Gram Panchayat, Jagdishpur Block, Bhojpur district, Bihar, Mrs. Shushum Lata, the Mukhiya (village head), is leading a remarkable transformation. Her leadership has turned challenges into opportunities, making her village a model of cleanliness, sustainability, and self-reliance. From sanitation and waste management to menstrual health awareness and education, her work proves how grassroots leadership can create lasting change.

When Mrs. Lata assumed office, sanitation was a major challenge—streets were littered, and waste disposal was inadequate. Under her leadership, Dawa

became Open Defecation Free (ODF) by December 2016, ensuring every household had access to a toilet under SBM-G. However, she knew that building toilets wasn't enough, behavior change, and waste management were key. Lata went further in her endeavor and established a solid and liquid waste management unit under SBM-G Phase II which helps in converting waste into organic manure that local farmers continue to use. The Panchayat now earns ₹15,000 per month from waste processing, proving that sanitation can be both an environmental and economic asset.

She led the conversion of a garbage dump—once the site of the historic Dunmrao Maharaj's court—into a modern marketplace, boosting local business and creating new economic opportunities. Mrs. Lata has also worked towards transforming education and student engagement which was done by enabling regular parent-teacher meetings to address concerns. A complaint box for students and teachers was installed to report issues and concerns. Sports, speech competitions, and remedial tuition classes have been organized to make learning more engaging. The results speak have been encouraging where school attendance has risen to 95%, with a significant increase in the number of girls attending school—a crucial step toward gender equality in education.

[To read more, click here](#) >



Swachhata Lens

Spot the differences



(A)



(B)





पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग
जल शक्ति मंत्रालय
DEPARTMENT OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI



To contribute to the next issue of the **Swachhata Samachar**, share your submission before the 15th of every month to swachhbharat@gov.in



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भारत सरकार

DEPARTMENT OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
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