Swachhata Became a People's Movement

Why in News?

Recently, The Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) 2026 campaign was launched.

The Big Picture – India's Sanitation Journey

- **2014 Baseline –** Rural sanitation coverage stood at just 39%.
- **2019 Achievement –** Rural India declared 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF).
- Over 10.28 crore toilets constructed across 36 States/UTs between 2014 and 2019.
- **The Shift (SBM-G Phase II)** – Moved focus from basic toilet access to sustainability and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).

Key Milestones and Progress (As of September 2026)

- **ODF Plus Villages –** 5.69 lakh total ODF Plus villages nationwide.
- 5.25 lakh have achieved top-tier ODF Plus Model status.
- **Waste Management Systems –**
- 5.38 lakh villages with Solid Waste Management (SWM).
- 5.65 lakh villages with Liquid Waste Management (LWM).
- **GOBARdhan Biogas –** 1,314 operational biogas plants across 582 districts.
- **Household-Level Infrastructure –** 12.22 crore individual toilets and 98,273 household biogas plants built.

ODF Plus Village Classifications

- An ODF Plus Village sustains ODF status, manages waste, and stays visually clean through 3 stages –
- **Aspiring –** Manages *either* solid *or* liquid waste.
- **Rising –** Manages *both* solid and liquid waste.
- **Model –** Manages both waste streams, maintains visual cleanliness, and displays ODF Plus messaging.

Behaviour Change – Building Habits, Not Just Toilets

- **Core Philosophy –** True transformation relies on everyday habits using, maintaining, and sustaining toilets.
- **Key Focus Areas –**
- Safe toilet usage and maintenance.
- Managing wet waste via compost pits or biogas.
- Everyday hygiene – handwashing, safe water storage, and zero public littering/spitting.

Women as the Primary Agents of Change

- **Swachhagrahis and SHGs –** Special preference given to women for door-to-door outreach, awareness, and cleanliness verification.
- **Real-World Impact –**
- **Howrah (West Bengal) –** SHGs collected 9.32 tonnes of plastic waste across 18 Ganga-adjacent Gram Panchayats in 18 days.
- **Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh) –** SHG women operate a Resource Recovery Centre—converting wet waste into vermicompost and selling dry waste for income.
- **Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) –** A Cluster Level Federation runs a Material Recovery Facility in partnership with SBM-G to trade plastic waste.

Image 1: Swachhagrahis promoting public hygiene

Schools and Youth – Building Cleanliness as a *Sanskaar*

- **School-to-Home Cycle –** Children learn waste segregation and hygiene at school, then bring these habits into their households.
- **Local Initiatives –**
- **Chandil (Jharkhand) –** A school banned single-use plastic and built soak pits for greywater.
- **Child Cabinets (Jharkhand) –** Students manage Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) stock; Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya established a dedicated MHM lab.
- **Swachhata Hi Seva 2026 Focus –** Youth-led initiatives including *Swachhata Gyan Yatras*, *School Samvads*, and learning SWM Rules, 2026.

Local Governance – Gram Panchayats and VWSCs

- **Gram Panchayats (GPs) –** Responsible for planning, implementation, Information/Education/Communication (IEC), and community mobilization.
- **Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) –** Support village-level supervision and execution.
- **Success Story (Gadli GP, Haryana) –**
- Achieved ODF Plus Model status led by Sarpanch Kanta Kanwar.
- Built community toilets, a village drainage network, and a 5-pond

greywater treatment system.
- Integrated GOBARdhan plants to generate agricultural manure and biogas.

Jan Bhagidari and The "Swachhata Hi Seva" Campaign

- **Institutional Support –** Funding pooled from Government allocations, Finance Commission grants, and Viksit Bharat-Gramin programs.
- **Swachh Sanivara (Karnataka) –** Community cleanliness drive held on the first Saturday of every month for schools, temples, and public spaces.

Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS) Annual Campaign –

- **2025 Participation –** Over **18.06 crore** citizens participated.
- **SHS 2026 Theme –** "*Swachhata Mein Sahbhag; Swachh Bharat, Viksit Bharat*" (Starts Sept 17).
- **Key Events –** *Ek Din, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath* collective *shramdaan* (Oct 1) and Special Gram Sabhas (Oct 2).

The Sanitation Economy and Livelihood Opportunities

- **Waste Collection (Betul, Madhya Pradesh) –** Babita Dhurve became the district's first female e-rickshaw waste collector, inspiring ~100 GPs in Betul to deploy collection vehicles.
- **Masons and Skilling (Nadia, West Bengal) –** Two masonry training institutes were created, training 2,400 men and women in specialized toilet construction.
- **Resource Recovery (Vedancha, Gujarat) –**
- System treats 200 KL of greywater daily for irrigation and groundwater recharge.
- GP earns Rs.2.5 lakh annually through compost and treated water sales while reducing waterborne diseases.

Reference

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