

**Swachhata Hi Seva Hits a Highpoint on Seva Divas – People Driving the Movement****Swachhata Hi Seva Hits a Highpoint on Seva Divas – People Driving the Movement**

A volunteer group in Delhi called We Mean To Clean planted 600 ecologically valuable trees in Delhi. Earlier they transformed a slum in Kirti Nagar, Delhi. Swachhata Hi Seva is fast becoming a movement that the people themselves are running. Many such organisations run by common people is the feature of the overall Swachh Bharat programme – citizens becoming inspiring leaders, owning the movement and run it.

Enthusiastic cleanliness initiatives among the people have become a feature ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Swachh Bharat initiative. Lending further impetus towards a cleaner India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had appealed to the nation during his recent Mann Ki Baat address to dedicate the last few weeks of September towards Swachhata Hi Seva, an initiative to pay a real tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on Gandhi Jayanti.

On the 15th of September, 2017, President Ram Nath Kovind had launched the Swachhata Hi Seva movement in Uttar Pradesh from a village in Kanpur. Ever since, the movement started it had begun to generate action and positivity. However, with the birthday of Prime Minister Modi on September 17th, it has taken off at a higher trajectory.

Cleanliness volunteers, NGOs and many karyakartas have enthusiastically dedicated themselves to Shramdaan towards cleanliness initiatives to celebrate his birthday as a 'Seva Divas'.

It also came to light that the Prime Minister had written touching personal letters inviting people from across the nation and across domains, to participate in the movement and spread the message of cleanliness. Accomplished Bollywood actor Anil Kapoor took to social media to thank PM Modi for honouring him with an invite to participate in the Swachhata Hi Seva movement and assured he would do his best. Reports said the PM had written to Malayalam superstar Mohanlal inviting him to participate in the movement. K T Rama Rao, young politician from Telangana belonging to the TRS party also received a letter from PM Modi, reports said.

Most ministries, government departments and prominent public servants have been carrying out cleanliness activities in every state across the nation. While Vice President Venkaiah Naidu was seen administering Swachhata Hi Seva pledges to citizens, Governor of Rajasthan, Kalyan Singh was seen picking up the broom by himself to clean his office.

While it was natural for government machinery to take up cleanliness activities for Swachhata Hi Seva, well-known citizens too have ardently joined the movement. In Maharashtra, music director Anu Malik was seen cleaning a place along with a number of citizens. Telugu movie superstar couple Nagarjuna and Amala along with citizen volunteers conducted cleanliness activities in Hyderabad. Actor Ravi Kishan led

cleanliness initiatives in Mumbai. Internationally renowned sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik first led a group of citizens in cleaning up the Puri beach in Odisha and then created a sand art wishing PM Modi on his birthday.

From Kargil to Ramanathapuram, Manipur to Maharashtra, a renewed sense of eagerness was seen for cleanliness. While the cleanliness movement was kicked off in Kargil with great energy, the District Collector and municipal officials participated in cleanliness activities. Apart from the sheer geographic spread of the movement in just 2 days, yet again, just like its mothership Swachh Bharat, citizens became engines for the movement. NCC cadets of girls' wings of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district cleaned the offices and several areas of the Poonch district. The cadets also took out an awareness rally with a message of clean India. Volunteers conducted cleaning activities in Indore. In Puducherry, a cleanliness drive to clean the beach was organised by NSS volunteers and Karaikal Municipality.

Citizens were seen cleaning the Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station in Delhi. Heroes from the Navy cleaned up the South Mumbai mangroves and sea front. On the occasion of International Coastal Cleanup day, citizens groups also removed trash and garbage from Mumbai's beaches. Women from Self Help Groups in Agra took Swachhata Shapath and discussed initiatives towards a clean and green India. In many places across the nation, Shramdaan and sanitation drives were held, besides activities around open defecation-vulnerable spots with participation of community, self-help groups and local NGOs.

On social media too, #SwachhataHiSeva was a top trend on the day it was launched. Subsequently, the hashtag has become a hub of positivity where people have posted their Shramdaan activities towards cleanliness using this hashtag. A heightened sense of awareness and participation has ensued since the launch of the movement on social media.

Finally, two happenings showed positive signs for the future of a clean India.

One, that NTPC has invited national and international players to set up 100 waste-to-energy pollution-free plants across the country under the Swachh Bharat mission. This bodes well for a clean and green India.

Two, the future of clean India seems to be in safe hands. The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation had announced a Swachh Bharat painting competition for primary school students from mainly government schools earlier. A total of 2.46 crore children studying in class 1-5 have submitted their entries for the Swachh Sankalp Swachh Siddhi painting competition. The enormous magnitude of participation and the awareness being created in these children towards cleanliness augurs well.

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