

# SWACHH BHARAT INTERVENTIONS TO AVERT A TICKING TIME BOMB

by Mohini Daljeet Singh

*The chief of Max India's CSR initiatives explains why the Clean India mission is the perfect avenue for corporates to make a difference in this exclusive article for 'India Investment Journal'. Sign up to view the latest edition.*



*Mohini Daljeet Singh is CEO of Max India Foundation and has vast experience of working for the underprivileged on the health platform. Under her stewardship, Max India Foundation has won several awards including the Golden Peacock Award for CSR for four consecutive years*

Prime Minister Modi's Swachh Bharat Mission is a timely call for action which is urgently required. India seems to be sitting on a time bomb of garbage, which could explode into serious health hazards with far reaching repercussions. The ticking has started.

Basics like clean drinking water, toilet facilities and proper solid waste disposal are not in place. Corporates have come on board addressing these issues through their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, making a slow but certainly positive contribution. Similarly, Max India Foundation, the CSR arm of Max India Group has worked on these important issues which have a direct bearing on lives of people.

In December 2014, Max India Foundation (MIF) adopted Village Dhakrani (population 12,000) in Dehradun district of Uttarakhand with a focus on health and hygiene of the villagers.

## Hygiene Improvement through Solid Waste Management

Dhakrani village had no solid waste management system in place and garbage was thrown by households on the streets and along the canal. Many households burnt the waste. There were no public dustbins or any system of street cleaning. With a large number of families involved with agriculture, a high amount of agricultural waste such as waste fodder, dried leaves and hay was being generated. On an average, a household produces around 2kg of waste daily, creating large quantities of garbage around the village area.

A solid waste management system covering the entire village has been initiated by Max India Foundation. Two waste bins for organic and inorganic waste have been distributed to around 2,000 households in the village and community bins installed at key locations. A tractor-trolley has been engaged for the collection of waste. Four sweepers are hired to sweep the streets daily.

Segregation of waste is being implemented so that the organic waste can be composted into manure, which can be used by farmers in village. The non-biodegradable waste is recycled. The villagers are also regularly sensitised on the importance of cleanliness as well as educated on segregation of waste.



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### Sewerage system

In Dhakrani village, there is no sewerage system in place and individual streets have open nalas or canals where waste water gets accumulated. There is no outlet for release of this waste water, which makes it a breeding ground for mosquitoes and flies. Further, waste water spills into the garbage spread on streets mixing into the source of drinking water supply.

To address the sanitation problems of the village, MIF commissioned Punjab-based Indo Canadian Village Improvement Trust (ICVIT) to conduct a topographical survey of Dhakrani Village and put in place a sustainable underground sewerage system in the village. The sewerage project was inaugurated in July 2015 by the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand.

The project is to be executed in five phases as the village is large and spread out over 6 sq km.

Under the project, all waste water and sewerage waste will be diverted through pipelines. A sewerage treatment plant of each phase will treat this waste. The remaining water can be used for irrigation. The target is to have zero open drains in the village and maintain hygienic environment in Dhakrani, with no standing waste water.

Although significant steps have been taken, corporates alone cannot address the issue in totality. It is the primary responsibility of the government to ensure proper waste management systems in every town of the country, execute and monitor them.

Additional "Swachh Cess" tax is being charged. This should be spent judiciously. I do not believe there should be compulsory legislation. The effort of corporates should be spontaneous, enthusiastic and voluntary.



See more at: <http://www.indiainvestmentjournal.indiaincorporated.com/swachh-bharat-interventions-avert-ticking-time-bomb/>

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