

# SWACHHATA DOOTS, HUL

- **Background**

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) necessitates the need for a change in behaviour, along with the creation of infrastructure. Every year in India, 1.3 million children die before they reach 5, many due to preventable infections. Over 40% of these deaths occur in the neonatal period: the first 28 days after delivery. Something as simple as hand washing can reduce these deaths significantly.

Communication plays an important role in changing behaviour. However, communication strategies in villages can be tricky. With no universal access to the internet and low television penetration, social change becomes a challenge. Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) launched a mobile-led rural behaviour change communication model, wherein the factory workers become agents of behaviour change in their villages. It involved spreading awareness about connection between cleanliness and eradicating diseases in the villages.

The programme creatively bundled various facets to create a strong employee volunteering programme. The facets: a large network of 29 factories and 2,000-plus factory workers located in remote locations; an innovation in media to make the message reach far and wide; the will and desire to contribute to the nation. The idea was to empower factory workers to become **Swachhata Doots** reaching out to villages with the message of '*Swachh aadat*' (clean habits).

- **Location, Date**

Pan India, 2015

- **Areas**

Rural

- **Stage/Scale**

Pilot

- **Objective of the assignment**

To empower factory workers and support communities around our manufacturing operations to adopt good hygiene practices

- **What was done**

The HUL employees, known as **Swachhata Doots (messengers of cleanliness)**, have become agents of behaviour change in their villages and shared two-minute audio stories on clean habits through their mobile phones. They reached out to school children, parents and community members thereby positively impacting rural communities.

Each HUL factory works out a congenial schedule that enables volunteering factory workers to set aside some time to act as *Swachhata Doots*. The workers go back to the villages they have come from (or otherwise allocated locations) and use the mobile phone to give a missed call to a number from where audio content stories on each of the three good habits of

drinking clean water, using a clean toilet and washing hands with soap are disseminated. The programme has also designed to have multiple touch points in the village: the *mohalla* (neighbourhood), *aanganwadi* (mother and childcare centre) and the school. This initiative runs smoothly, with complete ownership of the factory management team including human resources. Right from training of the workforce on what they need to do as *Swachhata Doots* to executing the programme is planned in a manner that there is no disruption to business.

- **Impact**

Through this programme, they have successfully reached over 30 lakh people.

- **Innovation**

The concept of *Swachhta Doots* was formed with the existing infrastructure and resources and had strongly contented the objective of the program.

- **Lessons learnt**

A big difference from earlier efforts is that the person communicating the message is from within the community and not an outsider (who has always been treated with suspicion)

- **Financials**

Not available

- **Economic sustainability/Revenue Model**

As the scale of the programme rests on existing infrastructure of factories and mobile networks, the cost of implementation is very low.

- **Implementer Contact Persons**

- **Parnil Sarin**  
Head of Marketing – Brand Unilever  
[Parnil.Sarin@unilever.com](mailto:Parnil.Sarin@unilever.com)

- **Sources and References**

- Company Website
- <https://www.hul.co.in/sustainable-living/india-sustainability-initiatives/health-and-hygiene/>
- <http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31818&articlexml=SWACHH-BHARAT-Volunteering-Clean-Information-22072017010021>