

6th Annual Conference on Good Rural Governance and Citizen Participation

S M Sehgal Foundation, Gurgaon, Haryana, India

April 8, 2016

S M Sehgal Foundation, Gurgaon, Haryana announces that *the Sixth Annual Conference* on Good Rural Governance and Citizen Participation will be held on April 8, 2016, in S M Sehgal Foundation, Plot No.34, Sector 44, Institutional Area, Gurgaon, Haryana. The theme of the 6th Annual Conference is "**Swachh Gaon: Preparing Communities and Panchayats**". We invite civil society organizations, foundations, corporate social responsibility officials, development practitioners, faculty and students of universities and government officials to the conference.

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE THEME

According to the census of 2011, 53.1% of the households in India do not have a toilet, with the percentage being as high as 69.3% in rural areas and 18.6% in urban areas. Hence, the theme 'Swachh Bharat' (Clean India), has quite pertinently become one of the major focus of central and state governments in the country in recent past.

The call for Swachh Bharat Mission was given by the Prime Minister of India on 2nd October 2014. Comprising of two sub missions, Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural or Gramin) and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban or Shahr), the mission aims to achieve Swachh Bharat with a specific focus on ensuring a toilet in every Indian household by the end of 2019.

To achieve this goal, all the stakeholders especially communities, Panchayats and district administration must take small steps at the village level. SBM plans to prepare and trigger communities and panchayats through support of foot soldiers or Swachh doots, community based monitoring and vigilance committees, women groups, ASHA workers, self help groups, pump operators among other local stakeholders. In addition, financial incentive of Rs 12,000 to identified households and community sanitary complexes with unit cost of up to Rs. 2 lakhs given by state governments, can be initial trigger for the households. Engaging these stakeholders at village level would generate need for sanitation and district administration would be required to be quick in disbursement of funds.

Handholding support to gram panchayats in preparation of sanitation plan of the village, e.g. solid and liquid waste management, drains and release of funds for its implementation will be crucial steps towards Swachh Gaon. Students of universities can play an important role in making communities aware and making sanitation plan. But universities need to create an environment for

engagement of students by providing teachers for guidance and creating time slots in college hours for such actions. Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India envisages that higher education institutes should connect with local communities for addressing development challenges of rural India. (for details see www.unnat.iitd.ac.in)

All these actions will lead to emergence of Swachh Champions, the action oriented people in the villages, who will be leaders in movement towards Swachh Gaon. Gram Panchayats and government can use these champions for achieving the objective of ODF and waste management. Swachh Champions and Gram Panchayats are likely to be key actors which will set the ball rolling. In addition, breaking barriers of communication, usage of toilets, behaviour changes and sustainability of sanitation structures will be important challenges, so discussion on good practices for addressing these challenges will be one of the key objectives of the conference.

Good practices and exemplars are around us. For example, Sikkim is Open Defecation Free and neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have made tremendous strides in elimination of open defecation. The solutions addressing these problems are well established and costs have been worked out, hence we need to take these learning forward and implement it in our villages.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

This conference will provide a forum to recognize Swachh Champions for contribution in Swachh Gaon. It will also be a platform for experience sharing and learning on preparing communities and Panchayats; working solutions can be discussed, appreciated and disseminated.

Some of the objectives of the conference are:

- To recognize Swachh Champions, the role models for SBM.
- To develop shared understanding of the meaning of Swachh Gaon, so that concerted efforts can be made by all stakeholders of SBM.
- Knowledge and experience sharing on successful examples of Swachh Gaon involving Communities and Panchayats.

METHODOLOGY AND FORMAT

The Conference on "Swachh Gaon: Preparing Communities and Panchayats " will be held on April 8, 2016 at Sehgal Foundation, Gurgaon. The conference methodology includes recognition of Swachh Champions, panel discussion and open sessions for sharing of knowledge and expertise on the theme from the various SWM stakeholders.

PARTICIPATION For participation in the conference, please email us your name, name of organization / university where you work / study, thematic areas of your work / study at ruralgovernance2013@gmail.com by Feb 29, 2016.

EXPANDING 'GOOD RURAL GOVERNANCE' WITH PARTNERS

The Good Rural Governance Program is one of Sehgal Foundation's programming and strategic initiatives, and the scale of its impact is a signal that our vision for rural India is taking root; a day when every person across rural India is empowered to lead a more secure and prosperous life.

With Good Rural Governance, Sehgal Foundation creates the environment where citizens can become informed, active drivers of their own development, and is helping to channel local forces for collective action by focusing our programs on mass awareness, capacity building and leadership development.

The ***Good Rural Governance has two initiatives:*** Good Governance Now (GGN) and Strengthening Village Level Institutions (SVLI). Both serve as catalysts to simultaneously tackle both the supply and demand side of effective, accountable local governance through capacity development for local government and rural citizens, ultimately helping to ensure that the planning of resource allocation and delivery of services take place in a more timely, equitable and transparent manner. Good Governance Now accomplishes this by creating the conditions for more active civic engagement among rural citizens, and Strengthening Village Level Institutions by building the capacities of village-level institutions.

The results of GRG are communities' participation in government programs, better access to social protection programs and empowered village institutions. The tangible results are Gram Panchayats get allocations of funds for village development, improved functioning of National Food Security Act and social protection programs such as old age pensions etc. The partners in implementation of GRG are Jindal Global Law School (Sonapat, Haryana), Swades Foundation (Mumbai) and community radio stations Alfaz-e-Mewat (Mewat, Haryana), Kisan Vani (Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh) and Radio Rim Jhim (Gopalganj, Bihar).

THE ORGANIZER:

S M Sehgal Foundation, registered as a public, charitable trust in India in 1999, strengthens community-led development initiatives to bring about positive social, economic and environmental change across India (www.smsfoundation.org).

For more details, please call: Vikas Jha, Group Leader & Navneet Narwal, Program Leader, Governance and Policy Advocacy, Sehgal Foundation, Plot # 34, Sector 44, Gurgaon-122003, Haryana, India, Phone-+91-124-4744124 / 4744119