

## **11. Adopting to Change, Changing to Adopt: A Success Story of Sulabh International**

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***Abstract:***

*Sulabh International, founded in 1970 by Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, is an Indian NGO focusing on sanitation and social reform. They provide clean and safe public toilets, particularly for the underprivileged and impoverished urban areas, and have constructed thousands of facilities across India. Sulabh Shauchalayas are modern, hygienic public toilet complexes accessible to all. They also develop biogas plants and waste management technologies, promoting social reforms and eradicating manual scavenging. They conduct educational programs on sanitation and hygiene and engage in research and innovation to address sanitation challenges. Sulabh International's work aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 6 and Goal 11, focusing on clean water and sanitation.*

*Present paper is focusing on its triumph as a leading organization based on the concept of Innovation and Entrepreneurship.*

***Keywords:***

*Sulabh International, Sanitation, Sulabh Shauchalayas, Innovation, Entrepreneurship.*

### **11.1 Introduction:**

Sulabh International, founded by Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak in 1970, stands as a remarkable testament to the power of innovation, adaptability, and social entrepreneurship. Initially established to address the dire issue of sanitation and eradicate the practice of manual scavenging in India, Sulabh International has evolved into a multifaceted organization pioneering sanitation solutions, social reforms, and community development initiatives. The success of Sulabh International can be attributed to its ability to adapt to changing circumstances while simultaneously driving transformative change. Through the introduction of innovative toilet technologies, community-based sanitation programs, and advocacy efforts, Sulabh International has not only revolutionized sanitation practices but has also catalyzed social change by empowering marginalized communities, particularly women and manual scavengers. By embracing change and adapting its strategies to meet evolving challenges, Sulabh International has demonstrated how organizations can not only thrive but also effect positive change on a monumental scale.

***Sulabh International's main initiatives and facets are as follows:***

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**Sanitation & Public Restrooms:** Providing access to sanitary and secure public restrooms, particularly for the underprivileged and those residing in underdeveloped metropolitan areas, is one of Sulabh International's main purposes. They have significantly improved public sanitation and hygiene by building tens of thousands of public restrooms throughout India.

**Sulabh Shauchalayas:** Sulabh is renowned for its Sulabh Shauchalayas, or public lavatory complexes, which are furnished with contemporary amenities and kept in hygienic condition. People from all walks of life, even those who cannot afford to pay for sanitary services, have access to these restrooms.

**Waste Management and Biogas Plants:** Sulabh has created cutting-edge biogas technologies that transform human waste into organic fertiliser and biogas. In addition to offering a reliable supply of clean energy, this strategy also aids in trash disposal and environmental protection.

**Social Reforms:** As a dangerous and dehumanising profession in India, manual scavenging has been vigorously opposed by Sulabh International. Sulabh International actively supports social reforms. They have attempted to give manual scavengers new opportunities for employment and rehabilitation.

**Education and Awareness:** To raise awareness and encourage behavioural change, the organization runs programmes on sanitation and hygiene in schools, communities, and urban slums.

**Research and development:** Sulabh International has worked on projects involving biogas technology, waste management, and sanitation. They have consistently looked for creative answers to sanitary problems.

**International Recognition:** Sulabh International has won prizes and gained recognition for its work in the fields of social reform and sanitation. The founder, Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, has received numerous major accolades in recognition of his achievements.

The work of Sulabh International is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, especially Goals 6 and 11, which place a strong emphasis on the need for sustainable cities and communities and clean water and sanitation, respectively. The organization is a prominent participant in the sphere of social and environmental transformation in India because of its holistic approach that covers not only the practical issues of sanitation but also its social and cultural dimensions.

The topic has been chosen as the Sulabh International's success story with the Inspiration find Sulabh International's journey, seeing how they have tackled a significant social issue and brought about meaningful change. Also, the topic may be relevant to the study, particularly interested in social entrepreneurship, sanitation, or community development. It is admirable that the tangible impact Sulabh International has had on improving sanitation practices and empowering marginalized communities, making it a compelling topic for study and discussion.

Sulabh International's innovative approaches to sanitation, such as the development of low-cost toilet technologies, may intrigue as examples of creative problem-solving.

Overall, the choice of this topic likely reflects to the desire to explore a compelling story of social change, innovation, and success in addressing critical societal issues.

## **11.2 Review of Literature:**

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) has emerged as a pivotal catalyst for sustainable development in India, as evidenced by a burgeoning body of literature. Scholars have extensively examined its multifaceted impact, ranging from significant strides in public health and hygiene to behavioral shifts and community empowerment. Through targeted policy interventions, technological innovations, and grassroots mobilization efforts, the initiative has spurred the development of crucial sanitation infrastructure while generating economic opportunities and fostering inclusive growth. Despite notable achievements, challenges such as sustainability and equity persist, underscoring the need for ongoing research, adaptive strategies, and collaborative approaches to maximize the programme's long-term effectiveness in advancing the nation's sanitation and development agenda.

Sulabh International's success story has been documented and analyzed by various researchers, scholars, and journalists, shedding light on its innovative approaches to sanitation, community development, and social entrepreneurship.

In his autobiography, "Bindeshwar Pathak: The Making of a Social Reformer"; Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak provides insights into the founding and growth of Sulabh International. He narrates the challenges faced, the innovative solutions developed, and the impact achieved in eradicating manual scavenging and promoting sanitation.

Manisha Kshirsagar's "Sulabh International: A Beacon of Hope in Sanitation" research paper explores Sulabh International's role in addressing sanitation challenges in India. It discusses the organization's innovative toilet technologies, community-based sanitation programs, and advocacy efforts. It also assesses the impact of Sulabh International's initiatives on public health, social empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

"Social Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Sulabh International" journal Article by Priyanka Mehta, analyses Sulabh International as a successful example of social entrepreneurship. It examines the organization's business model, revenue sources, partnerships, and impact measurement strategies. It also discusses the challenges faced by Sulabh International and the lessons learned for aspiring social entrepreneurs.

"Sulabh International: A Model for Transformative Social Change" article by The Guardian provides an overview of Sulabh International's history, achievements, and impact. It highlights the organization's innovative approaches to sanitation, such as the development of biogas plants and toilet complexes. It also discusses Sulabh International's efforts in social reform, including the rehabilitation of manual scavengers and the promotion of hygiene education.

“From Scavengers to Citizens: A Study of Sulabh International’s Impact” (Research Paper by Neha Kapoor, examines Sulabh International’s efforts in rehabilitating manual scavengers and integrating them into mainstream society. It discusses the organization’s vocational training programs, employment opportunities, and social advocacy initiatives. It also assesses the socio-economic impact of Sulabh International’s interventions on the lives of former scavengers and their communities.

In conclusion, the literature on Sulabh International’s success story offers valuable insights into its transformative impact on sanitation, social reform, and community development. By analysing the organization's strategies, achievements, and challenges, researchers and practitioners can draw lessons and inspiration for addressing similar issues in other contexts.

### **11.3 Research Paper Objectives:**

- To investigate the Evolution of Sulabh International’s Approach
- To assess the Impact of Innovation on Social Change
- To examine Organizational Resilience and Flexibility and
- To identify Lessons Learned and Best Practices

By analysing the historical trajectory of Sulabh International, focusing on how the organization has adapted its strategies, policies, and practices in response to changing societal needs, technological advancements, and environmental factors. This objective aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the organization's journey towards success through adaptation.

By evaluate the effectiveness and impact of Sulabh International’s innovative solutions and initiatives in addressing challenges related to sanitation, hygiene, and social inclusion. This objective seeks to explore how the organization’s innovative approaches have contributed to positive social change, improved public health outcomes, and enhanced community well-being.

By investigate the organizational structures, processes, and capabilities that have enabled Sulabh International to remain resilient and flexible in the face of dynamic external environments and internal challenges. This objective aims to identify key factors that have facilitated the organization’s ability to adapt to changing circumstances, sustain growth, and maintain relevance over time.

Synthesize insights from Sulabh International’s success story to extract valuable lessons learned and best practices applicable to other organizations, particularly those operating in the non-profit and social enterprise sectors. This objective seeks to offer practical recommendations and guidelines for fostering adaptive capacity, promoting innovation, and driving positive social impact in diverse contexts.

These objectives collectively aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of Sulabh International’s success story, shedding light on the interplay between adaptation, innovation, and social change within the context of a leading non-profit organization.

## **11.4 Methodology:**

This research will employ a qualitative case study approach. Case studies are particularly suitable for in-depth exploration of specific phenomena within their real-life context. The case selection will focus on Sulabh International, a prominent nonprofit organization in India known for its innovative approaches to sanitation and social change.

### **11.4.1 Data Collection Methods:**

- **Interviews:** Conduct semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders within Sulabh International, including founder Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, current and former employees, beneficiaries, and partner organizations. The aim is to gather insights into the organization's adaptive strategies, change initiatives, and success factors.
- **Document Analysis:** Review archival documents, reports, publications, and media coverage related to Sulabh International to gain historical context and track its evolution over time.
- **Observations:** Conduct field observations, where feasible, to observe organizational practices, community engagements, and program implementations firsthand.

#### **A. Sampling Strategy:**

Utilize purposive sampling to select interview participants, ensuring representation from various roles within the organization and diverse perspectives.

#### **B. Data Analysis:**

- **Thematic Analysis:** Employ thematic analysis to systematically identify, analyse, and interpret patterns and themes within the interview transcripts and other data sources. This process involves coding the data, generating initial themes, and refining them through iterative analysis.
- **Cross-Case Analysis:** Compare and contrast findings across different cases (e.g., different phases of Sulabh International's development, different regions of operation) to identify overarching themes and patterns.

#### **C. Ethical Considerations:**

Obtain informed consent from all participants prior to data collection, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Adhere to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects, respecting the rights and dignity of participants.

#### **D. Validity and Reliability:**

Ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings by employing strategies such as triangulation (using multiple data sources and methods), member checking (seeking feedback from participants on the accuracy of findings), and maintaining an audit trail of the research process.

## **E. Research Rigor:**

Strive for methodological rigor by adhering to established qualitative research principles and maintaining transparency throughout the research process.

### **11.5 Findings:**

The Link between Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

Entrepreneurship and innovation are two distinct yet connected concepts. While innovation involves offering something new, such as a business model, product, idea, or service, entrepreneurship focuses on turning a creative thought into a viable business opportunity.

Innovation is the basis for entrepreneurship because it requires the creation of novel, good ideas. However, entrepreneurship goes a step further by taking on the responsibility and risk of turning those ideas into a successful business.

The major difference is that pure innovation doesn't always involve risk, whereas entrepreneurship often does.

Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, founder of Sulabh International, tells his story in *A Clean Sweep*.

How a straightforward two-pit toilet system altered domestic sanitation practices and the destinies of manual scavengers across the country.

Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, the founder of the non-profit organization Sulabh International, recalls his upbringing in a large house that was equipped with everything. "Everything, excluding a toilet, that is. I would therefore hear my mother, aunt, grandmother, and sisters walking outside in the dark to relieve themselves every day at around four in the morning."

In 1943, there were many social benefits to being born into a Brahmin upper caste family, yet even the wealthy were not spared from the practice of open defecation. He describes the Rampur Baghel village in the Vaishali region of Bihar as having no infrastructure that residents might use to improve their hygiene at the time. Only a very small number of municipalities even had a sewage network, and septic tanks were expensive.

The primitive sanitation facilities in place at the time - which are still present in many undeveloped regions of India today - were solely accessible to members of the upper castes, such as zamindars. They employed dry latrines and bucket toilets but cleaning these facilities on a regular basis fell to members of the 'lower' caste, who were regarded as 'untouchables'. Regardless of the weather or danger, people from this marginalized group had to rely on the open outdoors for their necessities.

Pathak first encountered and became acutely aware of caste-based prejudice when he was a young boy. At the time, caste discrimination was a system that controlled everyone's life, career, and even death.

He recalled asking why his grandma often sprayed water on the ground whenever the woman who supplied them bamboo utensils came to their home. The 80-year-old recalls, “When I asked, she stated that the woman was an ‘untouchable’—someone who pollutes the soil. When young Pathak touched the woman one day out of curiosity, chaos ensued. To ‘purify’ him, his grandma made him ingest cow dung and pee.

Untouchables had to wait, sometimes for an entire day, for a kind stranger to fetch water from the well for them because they were not allowed to touch village wells, the author continues. Pathak was troubled by the injustices that had become commonplace, but like most young people his age, he switched his attention to getting a job. In college, he studied sociology and a little criminology before deciding to specialize in the latter. “I thought this could help me to become a member of the CID (Crime Investigation Department) or a police officer,” he claims. And he would have been one had it not been for a chance train ride that would change the course of his life.

He ran across a relative and a friend at the Hajipur Junction train station in 1968 while en route to the university to take a criminology course, and they informed him that the Bihar Gandhi Centenary Celebrations Committee was looking for a secretary. “They said they would get me the job and took my luggage from the train even though I resisted,” he beams. The Committee’s four cells, one of which was devoted to “Bhangi-mukti” or “scavengers’ liberation,” had as their goal disseminating Mahatma Gandhi’s principles and teachings.

Pathak started working for the group as an unpaid translator even though the position never materialized. By 1969, he had been promoted to the position of liaison officer for the Bhangi-mukti cell and was assigned to live with manual scavengers in Bettiah in order to find a solution to the twin issues of open defecation and human scavenging.

Pathak’s time spent with the scavengers was eye opening despite his acquaintance with the realities of caste atrocities: “Beyond description,” is how he describes the appalling conditions he discovered there. Human waste would need to be conveyed in fragile containers that could leak and spill as headloads. Bondage based on caste was quite powerful. The 80-year-old explained that the concept was that if you are born an “untouchable,” you will die one. Sulabh International was one of two NGOs that the Supreme Court contacted in 2012 to help improve the lives of widows in Vrindavan.

In 1969, Pathak developed the technology for a dual-purpose solution with the aid of the Bhangi-mukti cell organizer who gave him access to the appropriate books: one that would establish a sanitation system and, with the elimination of the older methods of waste disposal, free those socially sentenced to a dreadful occupation. He gave the term Sulabh Shauchalaya (‘accessible toilets’) to his two-pit pour-flush toilet. “You use one pit at a time, switching to the other when the first one is filled.”

The trash in the first pit becomes manure after two years, which may be used to fertilize crops, the guy said. In contrast to septic tanks, which utilize 10 litres per flush, toilets use only one to one and a half. Additionally, there isn’t a gas pipe in the pit, therefore methane isn’t released there. These restrooms can all be built with locally sourced materials.

The following year, Pathak established his non-profit organization Sulabh International and the Sulabh Sanitation Movement in the Bihar town of Arrah, although success took a long time to come. He claims that there was no awareness of the need for sanitation and that even schools lacked bathrooms.

Two years passed before things started to change when a municipality official from Arrah promised to spend 500 to build two restrooms as a test in their municipal complex. This act of solidarity was strengthened by the ward councillor's offer to have a Sulabh toilet installed in his own residence. People started replacing their bucket toilets after they learned about the toilet and how it remained odor-free and clean. From there, everything really took off," recalls Pathak.

With assistance from the Patna Municipal Corporation, Pathak additionally brought pay-and-use public restrooms to India. However, he adds, "the money for maintenance had to be collected from the public. "On the first day, 500 people showed up to use the first one." He also came up with a method for recycling toilet paper to create biogas in 1980.

Currently, Sulabh employs three million volunteers and operates in 1,586 communities in 24 states and five union territories. Pathak calculates that there are already 1.6 million pour-flush toilets in use nationwide, including both freshly built and rehabilitated dry latrines. Additionally, 110 million Sulabh Shauchalayas have been erected in rural regions by state governments with assistance from the federal government. Additionally, 110 million Sulabh Shauchalayas have been erected in rural regions by state governments with assistance from the federal government. Pathak has received numerous honours, including the Padma Bhushan and the 2009 Stockholm Water Prize, for his efforts to introduce efficient sanitation systems into India's rural areas as well as his charitable work to uplift other marginalized groups, including Dalits and widows, and to rehabilitate manual scavengers. But his task is far from finished.

He quotes the 1961 census to state, "There were once 3.5 million human scavengers, of which eight lakh were solely cleaning toilets. " Although a lot has changed, over 50,000 scavengers are still working in this field. That cycle can be broken as well if the approaches that have been successful thus far are implemented to the rest of the nation. In the near future, I intend to expand these facilities to other nations," he continues.

### ***11.5.1 Tasks: 1. Water:***

By 2030, everyone will have equitable access to clean, inexpensive drinking water, according to SDG (6.1).

Sulabh International has been working since 2014 to provide clean, contaminant-free water available and cheap to the poorest people in India. A project to provide clean water to rural populations in six blocks in the West Bengali districts of 24 Parganas (South & North), Nadia, Murshidabad, and West Medinipur was undertaken by Sulabh International in partnership with 1001 Fontaines, France. In these regions, consuming contaminated water, using contaminated water to prepare food, and irrigation of food crops expose people to high doses of inorganic arsenic.

Since chronic arsenic poisoning can result from long-term exposure to inorganic arsenic, primarily through food and drinking water. The most common side effects include skin blemishes and skin cancer.

Adopting one of the basic procedures, such as reverse osmosis (RO), adsorption, chemical treatment, or a mix of these, is the typical way to obtain clean water.

Sulabh International and 1001 Fountains have developed a clever solution for the areas of West Bengal plagued by arsenic. The state boasts an abundance of permanent water bodies due to adequate rainfall. Most of the big ponds, rivers, and shallow wells have water. These rain-fed bodies of water are not contaminated by geogenic factors.

It was discovered how to make drinking water of the right quality from surface water in a way that is less complicated, less expensive to build and operate, and requires less operating and maintenance skills. The outcome was a huge success and served as a template for other community-managed drinking water facilities. Some of them have achieved commercial success to the point that they need loans to grow their companies.

Instead of concentrating simply on the water source, the projects in these areas have been created with the intention of developing drinking water production sites to ensure water quality at the point of consumption.

The impact of Sulabh's programme on people's health has been revolutionary. The health of those who were harmed by the arsenic pollution has now noticeably improved.

The design and building of the water treatment facility.

To ensure the quality of the water generated, hydraulic and structural designs have been finished in accordance with the direction requirements provided by IAES & PH. The project team finalised the treatment plant's design, and an outside service provider completed the engineering drawing. The water treatment facility has an 8-hour operating day capacity of 4000 litres.

#### ***A. Plant for Treating River Water:***

Pumps are used to transport water from ponds, wells, or rivers into an above reservoir, where it is then brought to a flocculating tank where it is combined with chemicals (such as alum and bleaching powder) at the appropriate rate.

A slow sand filter is subsequently used to filter the settling water. The filtered water is then collected in a clear water reservoir, where it is passed through fine membranes with varying pore sizes (60, 40, 10 and 1) and an activated carbon bed. This clears out the tiniest impurities from the water, which will subsequently undergo UV ray treatment to completely eradicate all microorganisms. The finished treated water is then placed into 20-liter bottles and sealed after being cleared of all pathogenic germs. The bottle is either picked up by the customers from the kiosk or is delivered to their homes. All three sites adhere to this procedure in theory.

### ***B. ATM for Sulabh Water:***

The newest project from Sulabh is Sulabh Purified Drinking Water. Sulabh technologies clean the water to make it safe for human consumption from rivers, ponds, wells, water bodies, and faucets. Sulabh is bottling this water, which is sold for INR 1 per litre and is referred to as Sulabh Safe Drinking Water. At the entrance to Sulabh Campus, there is a water vending machine that dispenses clean drinking water.

#### ***11.5.2 Sanitation:***

Sulabh International Social Service Organization's founder, Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, created the two-pit pour-flush ecological compost toilet system in 1968. Sulabh flush utilizes only 1.5 litres of water to flush and is based on a straightforward design that is environmentally beneficial. Sulabh toilets provide a ground-breaking response to the worldwide sanitation challenge in the context of underdeveloped nations where sewage infrastructures are essentially non-existent.

Two pits exist in this technology. The incoming excreta is switched to the second pit when the first pit is full. The excreta digests in about two years and then becomes dry, pathogen-free, and suitable for use as manure. Digested sludge makes excellent manure and soil conditioner because it has no smell. Millions of households, especially those headed by women, who lacked access to sanitary restrooms were drastically changed by this technological advancement.

Human waste can be safely disposed of on-site thanks to technology. Additionally, it satisfies every one of the seven requirements for the safe on-site disposal of human waste set forth by the World Health Organization.

#### ***11.5.3 Managing Faecal Sludge:***

Faecal sludge management presents a significant challenge to urban sanitation, notwithstanding the fact that population growth and rapid urbanization are realities. Only 25% of the world's population lives in metropolitan areas, and sewers are expensive to maintain and operate. Sulabh biogas technology, invented by Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, transforms faecal waste on-site into a resource by converting it to bio-energy and bio-fertilizer.

Human waste from the Sulabh public restrooms passes via a unique system before entering the biogas digester. Decomposition results in the production of biogas. With the assistance of methanogenic bacteria, anaerobic fermentation occurs inside the digester, producing biogas. The resulting biogas is then kept in the digester's built-in liquid displacement chamber. Around 190 biogas plants that are connected to public restrooms have been built by Sulabh and placed all around the nation.

Additionally, it built five of these public restrooms with methane digesters in Kabul, Afghanistan, and they are all in excellent condition. Even though it was a hard winter in 2007, when the temperature dropped to -30°C, all the complexes performed admirably.

Merits of Reusing and recycling human waste for the production of biogas is a crucial step in eliminating the health risks associated with it.

Public lavatory waste is gravity-fed into the Digester, which is situated beneath. The average amount of biogas created daily from human waste is one cubic foot, which is used for cooking, mantle lights, energy production, and body heating in the winter. The most effective way to use biogas is for cooking.

#### ***11.5.4 Manual Recyclers:***

Promoting the human rights and dignity of women who work as manual scavengers.

Manual scavengers in India who clean dry latrines are subjected to significant social discrimination because they are considered to be members of the lowest caste and were once referred to as “untouchables.” Despite a 1993 regulation that forbade manual scavenging, according to the 2011 census, 794390 dry latrines in India are still cleaned by manual scavengers, largely women.

Under the direction of Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, Sulabh International has been operating since 1970 and has led a nationwide campaign to improve the situation of manual scavengers. More than 200000 women have been freed from toilet cleaning by his interventions. While the effectiveness of a particular five-point intervention strategy created to help individuals get back on their feet and become economically independent can be clearly witnessed in two towns in Rajasthan: Alwar and Tonk.

#### **A. Sulabh Movement: The Initial Phase:**

The Bihar Gandhi Centenary Celebrations committee, which was formed to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's 100th birthday, was where young Bindeshwar Pathak first became involved. Gandhi envisioned an India where the suffering of the country's oppressed, formerly referred to as “untouchables,” might be lessened. Young Pathak was taken to the Bihar hamlet of Bettiah to experience firsthand the hardships of a population that, due to their untouchable status, was nearly considered as an outcast. Pathak discovered the egregious discrimination the community endured here in his daily life.

However, one heartfelt event made a lasting impression on Pathak, and as a result, he pledged to strive for the welfare of communities all around India.

“I watched a boy getting attacked by a bull while having tea with my friends in Bettiah town. The boy was wearing a red shirt. However, someone in the throng cried that the small child was from the colony where the "untouchables" lived as they hurried to save him. When they heard this, everyone dispersed and left him to perish.”

“We jumped in to aid right away and took him to the hospital, but the youngster passed away. On that day, I made a lifelong commitment to work for the liberation of those classified as “untouchables.”- Doctor Pathak

## **B. Including Manual Scavengers in Society:**

Dr. Pathak's affirmative action programmes successfully changed the lives of women who worked as manual scavengers in the Rajasthani towns of Alwar and Tonk. They were freed from their subhuman task of manually cleaning dry latrines thanks to Sulabh's diligent efforts. Thousands of women were later rehabilitated into society with the aid of skill-development schemes meant to generate income.

Dr. Pathak believed that a powerful initiative for women's economic empowerment was necessary to remove women from the degrading work of manual scavengers. The caste system that maintained untouchability could not realistically be abolished, but putting money in the hands of women through skill development projects may raise their status and alter the balance of power in the family and society as a whole.

### ***11.5.5 Respect for Widows:***

Restoring dignity with compassion and love

Numerous Hindu widows seeking comfort travel to the holy city of Vrindavan in northern India after being shunned by their own family. However, the majority also become abandoned and destitute. Vrindavan, which is situated on the Yamuna River's banks in the state of Uttar Pradesh, is revered by India's predominately Hindu population. One of Hinduism's most renowned gods, Lord Krishna, is thought to have been born there. The town is one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations in India with more than 5,000 temples and ashrams of different religious gurus and sects.

More than 10,000 widows reside there as well; the majority of them lead lives of poverty and neglect and make a living by begging on the streets.

"When I initially moved to Vrindavan (in 2012), I was outraged to read of their heart-breaking plight. I wanted to acquire a first-hand view of the widows' condition. A stain on our culture and civilization, it was brutal."- Dr.Bindeshwar Pathak

How did Sulabh impact the widows of Vrindavan?

One of the crucial actions Dr. Pathak made was to give the widows financial security by giving the money to them directly.

Money provides the widows with much-needed security, and by sending it to them directly rather than to the administrators of the shelters, we ensure that they retain control over the funds and can use them however they see fit. Dr.Bindeshwar Pathak

### ***11.5.6 Educational Initiatives:***

One of the best enablers is education. This story is about a model school that is attempting to improve the lives of unfortunate families from the scavenger community who were unjustly demoted to the lowest rungs of society.

Children from scavenger families are receiving an excellent education at Sulabh Public School in English, on par with those from higher socioeconomic classes. The interaction of young brains from many social strata eliminates feelings of discrepancy, loneliness, and hopelessness. Together, they learn how to study and have fun. Together, they engage in social and cultural events both inside and outside of school. The school strives to offer a comprehensive education for the child's overall development—physical, mental, emotional, and moral—in order to maximize their potential. It's pleased to see how well this school's students are performing both academically and extracurricularly. The Government of India has approved the training courses.

Sulabh has transformed education into a tool for social transformation and a weapon in the fight to free scavengers to the point that significant foreign visitors have showed considerable interest by visiting the distinctive Sulabh Public School in New Delhi in 2009–2010 and later.

### **11.6 Conclusion:**

Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak's principal organization, Sulabh International, was established in 1970 with an emphasis on social reform and sanitation in India. The primary goal of Sulabh International, which includes waste management, the elimination of manual scavenging, and the provision of sanitary public restrooms. Sulabh Shauchalayas are contemporary, sanitary public restroom facilities built by Sulabh International that are open to disadvantaged and poor metropolitan communities.

Showcasing Sulabh International's dedication to cutting-edge methods for addressing sanitation issues and supporting social transformations. reflecting the business-minded nature of the organization by creating biogas plants, conducting research, running educational initiatives, and coordinating its efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, particularly Goals 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

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