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Sweeping streets as important as Prime Minister's job, Sadhguru tells Swachhata Warriors

8 May 2020, Coimbatore: In a riveting one hour interaction with Swachhata Warriors, sanitation departments around the country who are striving to keep clean Indian cities ravaged by the virus, Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation lauded their efforts and asserted that appreciation of the sanitary worker is most important to build a culture of citizen participation in the Swachh Bharat Mission. "The broom is not the tool that will clean India. It is the active participation of citizens that will play a crucial role in keeping our towns and cities clean," Sadhguru said.

The online interaction was anchored by the Secretary of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Shri. Durga Shanker Mishra. Several city Municipal Commissioners including those of Madurai, Agra, East Delhi and Surat and the District Magistrate of Ujjain plugged in to interact with Sadhguru besides two sanitation workers from Ghaziabad and Bengaluru whose video messages were played during the interaction. The Joint Secretary of MoHUA and the Mission Director of Swachh Bharat Shri. Vinod Kumar Jindal also participated.

Sadhguru answered questions on stigmatization of sanitary workers, overcoming fear and anxiety, lessons for humanity from the virus and waste segregation. Responding to Rajesh, the sanitation worker from Ghaziabad who said that he and his colleagues worked in fear of the virus and stigma, Sadhguru said, "Sweeping the street, keeping it clean is as important as keeping your temple clean, as important as the Prime Minister's job. There is no one work which is more important than the other." Sadhguru also

offered to release an awareness message on the significance of sanitation workers who are performing nation building services.

Mamata, a Pourakarmika from Bengaluru told Sadhguru that she takes pride in keeping the city clean and is motivated by the appreciation and admiration that residents have showered on her and her colleagues during these times. Responding in Kannada, Sadhguru told her that she and her colleagues are performing one of the most critical services without which it would be impossible to keep the Nation clean and thanked her for the services.

In response to a question from Surat Municipal Commissioner Shri. Banchhanidhi Pani on how to deal with stigmatization of sanitary workers, Sadhguru said, “When people feel that someone could be a possible carrier, naturally they would like to keep distance. We should not misunderstand this extra distancing as discrimination or stigma” and observed that “sanitation workers, medical workers, doctors, police are being celebrated like never before” for their selfless service despite personal risk.

Speaking on waste segregation, a topic raised by the Mission Director of Swachh Bharat Shri. Vinod Kumar Jindal, Sadhguru said there was a need to focus on segregating domestic and industrial waste and for the treatment industry to be incentivized and promoted as an economically lucrative proposition. “Polluting industries must not be allowed to set up their own treatment plants; treatment industry must grow; your effluent should be my business, only then will it become efficient,” said Sadhguru.

Commenting on the need for repeated extensions of lockdown, Sadhguru urged citizens to lock down rigorously in their own interest and the interest of the Nation. “This is our opportunity as a generation of people to stand up and show who we are. As Indians, let’s show who we really are.”

Since the lockdown, Sadhguru has interacted online with several groups including business leaders, doctors, healthcare workers and academicians. Similar interactions have been organised with National HRD Network (NHRDN) and The IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) on 9th and 10th May respectively.

If you would like to know more about this, please write to mediarelations@ishafoundation.org.