Sanitation is an important Sustainable Development Goal, without which no society can secure better health for its people. Taking this into consideration, a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) was signed by the Zila Parishad of Mansa and Bharat Petroleum for taking up works under the ‘Project School SOS.’

Project School SOS has been taken up as a Pilot in District Mansa. Being implemented in convergence with MGNREGA and CSR funds of Bharat Petroleum (BP), the project to provide sanitation facilities will benefit both schools and Anganwadi Centres.

“Under this MoU, school toilet units, Anganwadi toilet units and soak pits are being constructed. In addition, projectors and sanitary pad vending machines are being provided to schools with BP CSR funds,” Additional Deputy Commissioner Development Amarpreet Kaur Sandhu said.

A total of Rs. 159.98 lakhs have been converged under Project School SOS, with Rs 79.66 lakhs sourced from Bharat Petroleum CSR funds and Rs 80.32 lakhs under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, he added.

School Toilet Units: As many as 48 school toilet units are being targeted, each with 2 toilets for girls, 2 for boys and 4 urinals with wash facilities. Of these, 30 toilet units have been completed.

School Soak Pits: To manage grey water in schools a total of 77 soak pits were to be constructed. Till date 72 soak pits have been completed.

Anganwadi Toilet Units: A total of 83 Anganwadi toilet units are being constructed, of which 78 units are completed as on date.
**Projectors:** Under Bharat Petroleum CSR funds, a total of 21 Projectors have been provided to schools to promote multimedia presentations in learning.

**Sanitary Pad Vending Machines with Incinerators:** A total of 17 Sanitary Pad vending machines with incinerators have been provided to schools.

**Impact:**

- Improved hygiene and sanitation in schools and Anganwadi Centres
- Employment to MGNREGA Job card holders
- Access to sanitary pads and safe disposal of used sanitary pads
- Soak pits help manage grey water from mid-day meal kitchens, prevent stagnation and breeding of mosquitoes, and recharge ground water

All such initiatives have contributed to positive behaviour change with people learning about the benefits of using toilets, water conservation, soak pits and keeping their villages and surroundings clean. For children, it could promote an aspiration to become water protectors and agents of change. In turn, they would motive their parents to conserve water. One such example was seen in village Moosa where parents after observing the soak pit at a village Primary school have started constructing soak pits at their homes without the help of the government schemes.
In another incident, students from GPS Barnala participated in a state level Children’s Science Congress held at Kapurthala in 2019. Under the theme health, hygiene and sanitation, students presented a model of community soak pits. They won appreciation for their in-depth knowledge about water conservation and soak pits.

**Inputs:** Mandeep Singh Sidhu, District Coordinator MGNREGS, District Mansa