



# PRAYAGRAJ MAHA KUMBH MELA

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025

*Hygiene Awareness  
Campaign Report*





## The Global Interfaith WASH Alliance Leads a Historic Swachhta, Health and Hygiene Movement together with Dettol Banega Swachh India, RB at the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh 2025

*Impacting millions of pilgrims in the world's largest gathering of humanity*

With great enthusiasm the **Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA)**, a one of its kind interfaith initiative for improved WASH, came together with **Reckitt Benckiser (RB)**, the world's largest leading consumer health and hygiene company, and RB's flagship campaign **Dettol Banega Swachh India (DBSI)** for a historic swachhta, health and hygiene campaign at the **Prayagraj Maha Kumbh Mela**. The movement engaged countless devotees and pilgrims over 45 days and was carried out under the vision and leadership of GIWA's Founder, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, and GIWA's Secretary-General, Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji along with the team and volunteers from GIWA, RB and the collaboration of Parmarth Niketan.

GIWA joined DBSI to led a first-of-its-kind hygiene movement, striving to ensure that cleanliness, health, and tradition were seamlessly integrated into every aspect of the pilgrimage experience. This initiative reaffirmed their commitment to Viksit Bharat @2047, supporting India's vision of a healthier and more sustainable future.



With nearly two decades of experience at the Kumbh, GIWA brought forward its learnings from past interventions in Prayagraj, Ujjain, Nashik, and Haridwar, making this Maha Kumbh 2025 its most extensive engagement yet. The joint efforts of the campaign spanned all 25 sectors, covering 4,000 hectares, ensuring that hygiene interventions were accessible across the entire Mela.

As part of its large-scale impact, DBSI was supported by GIWA to enable impactful handwashing interventions and outreach, reinforcing hygiene as a key part of the pilgrimage journey. Recognizing the need for a sustainable approach to hygiene.

In partnership with Akhadas, millions of soaps were distributed at food-serving areas, encouraging handwashing before and after meals. To support 15,000 sanitation workers managing 1.5 lakh toilets, this campaign provided hygiene essentials, hands-on training, and digital access to hygiene resources, ensuring long-term sanitation standards. The initiative also extended to Kalpvasis (devotees staying for the full 45 days) and several tented camps, reinforcing hygiene access in these temporary settlements.



This historic campaign at the sacred Triveni Sangam—where the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers converge—provided a powerful platform for this campaign to raise awareness about critical issues of hygiene, sanitation, and environmental preservation.

Under the visionary leadership of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Founder of GIWA and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary General, GIWA emphasized the urgent need to protect Maa Ganga and other sacred rivers from pollution. By integrating spiritual tradition with sustainable action, the initiative reinforced the message that cleanliness and environmental stewardship are essential for a healthier and more harmonious future for all.



**Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President, Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh and Co-Founder, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, said,** “Maha Kumbh is not just a spiritual gathering; it is a collective expression of our values and responsibilities. Through Dettol Banega Swasth India’s unprecedented outreach, we witnessed the power of faith-driven action in inspiring millions to embrace hygiene as a way of life. By integrating tradition with impactful initiatives, this movement has set a new benchmark for public health at such a massive scale, reinforcing our shared vision for a Swachh and Swasth Bharat.”

**Gaurav Jain, Executive Vice President, Reckitt – South Asia, said,** “Reckitt’s Dettol Banega Swasth India campaign has always been about driving meaningful change at scale. Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 was an unparalleled opportunity to embed hygiene practices into this historic gathering, and we are proud to have contributed to a healthier, cleaner Kumbh experience for millions. Our efforts, in collaboration with government authorities and community stakeholders, reaffirm our commitment to Viksit Bharat @ 2047, ensuring that hygiene is not just a practice but a way of life and a key pillar in India’s progress toward a cleaner and healthier future.”

**Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary-General of GIWA, shared,** “True spirituality is not just about ritual worship but about living in alignment with divine values—compassion, service, and responsibility. Through our efforts at the Maha Kumbh, we merged ancient wisdom with modern solutions, ensuring that millions of devotees experienced both spiritual upliftment and physical well-being. This initiative has laid a foundation for a future where faith and hygiene go hand in hand, inspiring a cleaner, healthier, and more united world.”



**Ravi Bhatnagar, Director - External Affairs and Partnerships at Reckitt – South Asia, said,** “At Reckitt, we believe that access to hygiene is a fundamental right. Through our collaboration with GIWA and Parmarth Niketan, we were able to create a meaningful and scalable model of hygiene intervention at the Maha Kumbh. Our mobile awareness truck, branded materials, and direct engagement strategies brought hygiene education to the heart of this spiritual gathering, ensuring that every message was delivered with compassion and clarity. We are proud to be part of a campaign that not only reached millions but also inspired lasting habits for a healthier India.”





## Key Activities and Initiatives of the Campaign

This groundbreaking campaign at the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 implemented a range of impactful initiatives to promote cleanliness, hygiene, and sustainability. Some of the key activities and efforts included:

- ***Establishing a Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Maha Kumbh Mela Camp*** – Designed to uphold environmental responsibility while providing a model for future religious gatherings.
- ***Setting Up Handwashing Stations and WASH Facilities*** – Providing accessible and visible hygiene infrastructure at its camp to lead by example.
- ***Integrating Hygiene Messages into Large-Scale Faith-Based Events*** – Ensuring that key messages of health and cleanliness reached devotees in a culturally and spiritually engaging manner to promote sustainable behavior change.
- ***Engaging Devotees Through Interactive Cultural Activities*** – Thousands of puppet shows, nukkad natak (street plays), and other cultural performances brought hygiene awareness to life through storytelling, making it an integral part of the pilgrimage experience.
- ***A Mobile Awareness Truck***, featuring digital hoardings and video messages on sanitation and cleanliness went around the Kumbh Mela and was stationed regularly at the camp where there was a high footfall of countless pilgrims and devotees.
- ***Distributing Free Soaps and Promoting Handwashing*** – Encouraging hand hygiene as a fundamental aspect of the Kumbh experience.
- ***Distributing Campaign-Branded Merchandise*** – Reinforcing the campaign's message through take-home items such as cloth bags, umbrellas, t-shirts and caps, etc that encouraged participation and ensured long-term retention of hygiene habits.
- ***Leveraging Digital Channels and Social Media*** – Extending the campaign's reach beyond the Kumbh grounds to create nationwide awareness.
- ***Conducting Large-Scale Cleanliness Drives*** – Mobilizing volunteers and devotees in efforts to maintain cleanliness throughout the Mela grounds, especially organizing a large scale clean up at the end of the Maha Kumbh Mela which inspired millions to take home the message of health and hygiene in a very powerful way.
- ***Honoring Sanitation Workers*** – Recognizing and supporting the invaluable contribution of 15,000 sanitation workers who managed 1.5 lakh toilets, ensuring dignity and sustainability in sanitation efforts.

Through these diverse and large-scale interventions, the campaign successfully embedded hygiene, health, and environmental stewardship into the spiritual fabric of the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025.



## ***More on GIWA's Sanitation and Hygiene Initiatives at Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 with DBSI:***

### **National Youth Day Celebration**

GIWA launched its first event at Parmarth Niketan's Kumbh Camp by celebrating National Youth Day, honoring Swami Vivekananda. A special Youth Rally was organized to promote swachhta (cleanliness) and emphasize the role of youth in fostering positive societal change. The day also featured a mini clean-up drive, engaging locals, children, and youth in the collective mission of community care and environmental responsibility.



### **Establishing a Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Maha Kumbh Mela**

GIWA, in partnership with Parmarth Niketan, established an eco-friendly and waste-free Kumbh Camp, setting a new benchmark for sustainable religious gatherings. Constructed using jute fabric, bamboo, wood, and metal, the camp minimized environmental impact while promoting green living.

By enforcing a strict no-plastic policy, providing sustainable water bottles, setting up dustbins, and using metal plates, cutlery, and reusable table linens, the camp maintained a zero-waste environment. Additionally, sustainable materials were used for the morning yagya and evening aarti, preserving the sanctity of the Sangam while exemplifying responsible environmental stewardship.





## Setting Up Handwashing Stations and WASH Facilities

To lead by example, GIWA established handwashing stations and WASH facilities throughout its camp, ensuring devotees had easy access to proper hygiene infrastructure. These stations reinforced the importance of hand hygiene, particularly in a setting where millions gathered, helping to prevent the spread of infections and promoting long-term behavioral change.





## Integrating Hygiene Messages into Large-Scale Faith-Based Events

Recognizing the deep connection between faith and behavior, GIWA infused health and hygiene messages into major spiritual and religious events, as well as the daily Ganga Aarti ceremonies just across from the Sangam. Through sermons, Kathas, and discussions by revered saints and spiritual leaders, devotees were encouraged to embrace cleanliness as a spiritual practice, reinforcing sustainable behavior change within the religious experience.

Powerful messages were delivered at Parmarth's Hanumat Katha, conducted by the popular and renowned Bageshwar Dham Sarkar Shri Dharendra Krishna Shastriji, where in GIWA's Founder, Param Pujya Swamiji, shared about the message and effort of the campaign. In addition to this, regular messages about sanitation, cleanliness, and hand hygiene were given to thousands of devotees in the hours they gathered before the Katha.



Kathakar Devi Chitralkha ji joined Pujya Sadhviji, GIWA's team and distributed eco-friendly bags on one occasion with reusable water bottles and environmentally friendly gifts to sanitation workers, Parmarth seva teams, and boatmen serving at the Sangam. These products carried messages on swachhta (cleanliness), hygiene, and eco-friendly living.





## Engaging Devotees Through Interactive Cultural Activities

GIWA harnessed the power of storytelling and performance to engage devotees in a meaningful way. Thousands of **puppet shows, nukkad nataks** (street plays), and other cultural activations were conducted across the Kumbh Mela, effectively weaving hygiene awareness into the fabric of the pilgrimage. These interactive performances not only entertained but also educated, ensuring that hygiene and cleanliness remained a central focus of the spiritual journey.





## A Mobile Awareness Truck: Bringing Hygiene Messages to the Masses

To maximize outreach, GIWA deployed a Mobile Awareness Truck featuring digital hoardings and video messages on sanitation and cleanliness. This truck traveled across the Kumbh Mela, making regular stops at high-footfall areas, including the GIWA camp, to engage countless pilgrims and devotees. The camp, located at a prime location, served as a hub where thousands of devotees, spiritual leaders, and visitors gathered daily to participate in religious rituals, discourses, and community services.

The Mobile Awareness Truck played a pivotal role in spreading awareness, drawing large crowds to watch impactful video messages and demonstrations on sanitation, hand hygiene, and environmental conservation. Through this interactive approach, devotees not only received vital hygiene education but were also actively engaged in discussions on best practices for maintaining cleanliness at the sacred site and in their communities.



## Distributing Free Soaps and Promoting Handwashing

As part of its commitment to promoting hygiene and sanitation at the world's largest spiritual gathering, GIWA undertook impactful initiatives to encourage frequent handwashing. Free soaps were distributed to devotees, including children and elderly pilgrims, ensuring access to essential hygiene supplies and reinforcing regular handwashing as a fundamental practice. Handwashing stations were positioned near food distribution points, rest areas, and entry points, allowing continuous access to clean water and soap. These efforts played a crucial role in reducing the risk of infections and instilling lasting hygiene habits.





### Distributing Campaign-Branded Merchandise

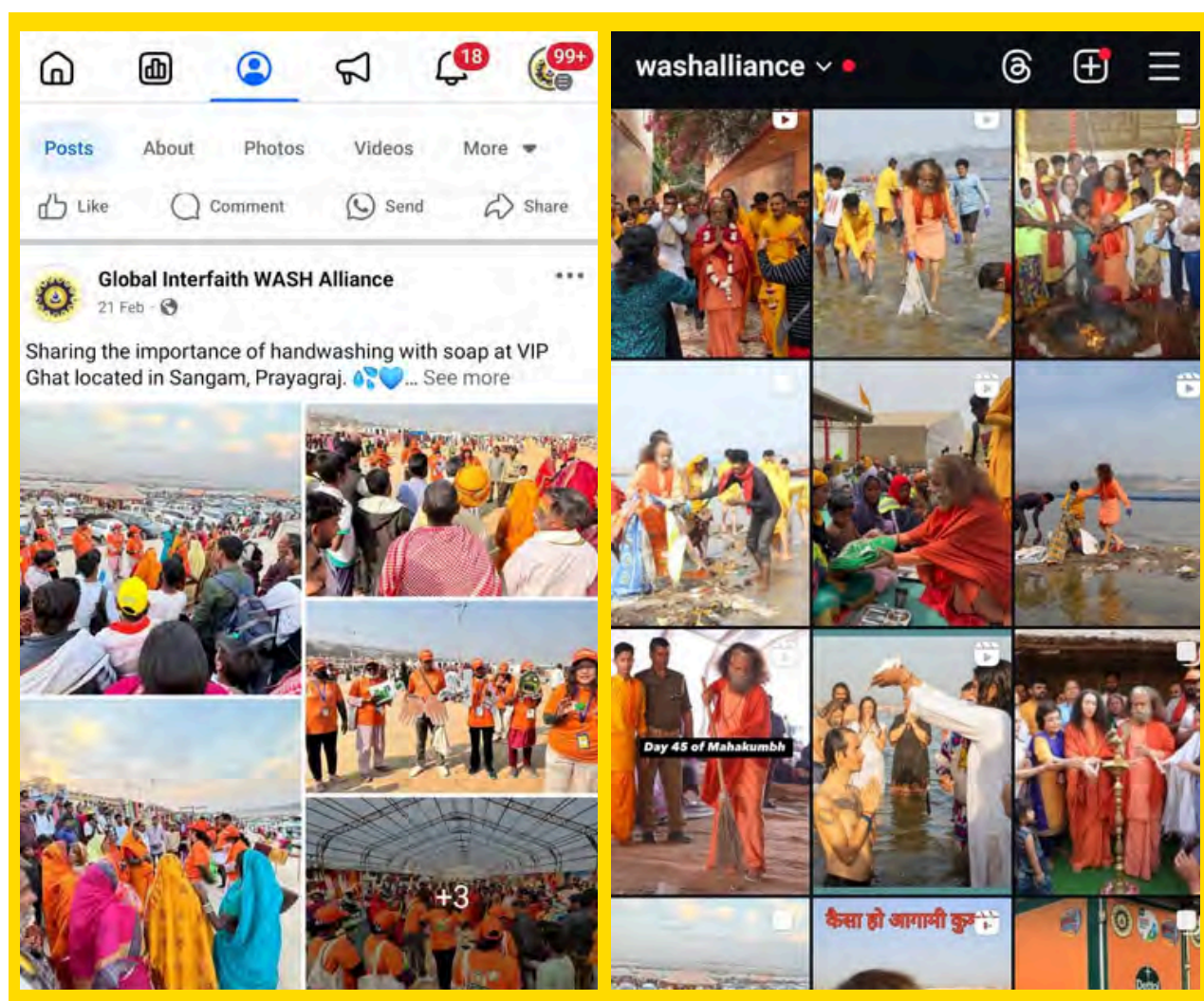
To ensure long-term retention of hygiene habits, GIWA distributed campaign-branded merchandise such as cloth bags, umbrellas, T-shirts, and caps. These items not only served as practical take-home reminders of the importance of cleanliness and sanitation but also encouraged participation by making hygiene a visible and integral part of the Kumbh experience. Devotees proudly wore these items, helping spread awareness throughout the Mela grounds and beyond.





## Leveraging Digital Channels and Social Media

To extend its reach beyond the Kumbh grounds, GIWA utilized digital channels and social media platforms to spread awareness about sanitation, hygiene, and environmental conservation. Daily updates, live streams, and engaging posts highlighted the various activities undertaken by the campaign, inspiring people worldwide to adopt healthier and more sustainable practices. The use of short videos featuring spiritual leaders, testimonials from devotees, and before-and-after visuals of cleanliness drives helped to amplify the impact of the initiative on a national scale.



Special aarti tribute to Swachhta Workers - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfoUbSBZRrs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfoUbSBZRrs)

Special Bhandara to Swachhta Workers - <https://youtube.com/shorts/d4pZppxSV0E?feature=shared>

Special Bhandara to Swachhta Workers - [https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGmuJXDzyjo/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_button\\_share\\_sheet&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==](https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGmuJXDzyjo/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==)

## Conducting Large-Scale Cleanliness Drives

Mobilizing volunteers, devotees, and environmental enthusiasts, GIWA organized extensive cleanliness drives throughout the Kumbh Mela. These efforts played a crucial role in maintaining cleanliness, with special emphasis on public spaces, ghats, and riverbanks. The grand finale of the campaign saw a large-scale clean-up effort at the end of the Maha Kumbh Mela, sending a powerful message to millions of pilgrims about the importance of maintaining cleanliness. This final initiative left a lasting impression, motivating devotees to take the message of sanitation and hygiene back to their homes and communities.



## Honoring Sanitation Workers

Recognizing and celebrating the invaluable contribution of sanitation workers, GIWA honored the 15,000 dedicated individuals who managed 1.5 lakh toilets across the Maha Kumbh. These unsung heroes were acknowledged through special appreciation events, where they were provided with meals, clothing, and dakshina as a token of gratitude. They also attended Parmarth's Ganga Aarti conducted at Sangam, Prayagraj where Sadhviji appreciated their efforts and blessed them and their families for good health and happiness. By highlighting their crucial role, GIWA aimed to instill a greater sense of respect for sanitation workers while reinforcing the importance of maintaining dignity and sustainability in sanitation efforts.





In conclusion, by integrating faith-driven action with sustainable hygiene and sanitation efforts, GIWA set a new benchmark for public health at mass gatherings. Through multi-stakeholder partnerships, innovative technology, and deep community engagement, these efforts at Maha Kumbh 2025 was more than a campaign — it was a movement, setting a new benchmark for public health interventions at large- scale religious gatherings. Through these concerted efforts, GIWA, along with Dettol RB, successfully instilled the values of sanitation, health, and environmental consciousness, ensuring that the message of swachhta endured far beyond the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025.