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Better Sanitation Could Be Worth \$5.5 Billion To Indian Economy

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This week a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between a Tokyo bank and one of India's leading umbrella business groups. The Memorandum was about a project that could help lift the economy of a South East state, India's eighth biggest.

The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ Ltd. (BTMU), the banking arm of Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG) signed the Memorandum with the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Socio Economic Development Foundation.

The planned collaboration will build sanitation facilities in about 200 girls' schools in the state of Andhra Pradesh and its environs. BTMU has pledged \$1.7 million to fund the construction.

Studies have found that the lack of proper and safe sanitation facilities for females in India is a major contributing factor to the high level of girls dropping out of education, especially at secondary school level. This happens across many parts of [Asia](#), especially in rural areas, but the problem is acute in India. Safety factors in as well. A lack of protected facilities constructed within school buildings leaves girls highly vulnerable.



Taiju Hisai, India head of Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ and FICCI Secretary General Dr A Didar Singh, with the Pledge presented to Dr Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh

The CIA World Factbook [suggests](#) that if just one percent more girls were enrolled in schools, India's GDP would rise by an estimated \$5.5 billion. By comparison, [this figure is higher](#) than the total budget (\$4.81 billion for India's main health department for 2015/16).

This is all linked to a national campaign launched by the current government, 'Swachh Bharat-Swachh Vidyalaya,' that means 'Clean India: Clean Schools.' A key feature of the campaign is to ensure that every school in India has a set of functioning and well maintained water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

Indian Prime Minister Modi called on industry to contribute to the 'Swachh Bharat' initiative, so what happens next in Andhra Pradesh will be closely scrutinized by the rest of India.

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Chandrababu Naidu and Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Mr. Yoichi Miyazawa signed the MoU.

Mr Taiju Hisai, Regional Executive of BTMU India said,

“ BTMU strongly believes that to ensure sustainable growth, we need to invest for the long-term. It is with this in mind that we decided to partner FICCI-SEDF in the Swachh Vidyalaya campaign as something as basic as proper and safe sanitation would make a vast difference to the lives and future of India's next generation, especially the girls.’

Part of the donation will be used to fund awareness programs to teach the importance of having proper and safe sanitation for school-going children, especially girls. FICCI-SEDF will partner with BTMU and administer the

sanitation project. Alongside, BTMU plans, where possible, to build biogas digester toilets to make a long-term contribution towards conserving the environment and improving waste management in the country.

News of the MoU was given out by the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

“ FICCI strongly believes that by providing basic sanitation facilities that offer good hygiene and privacy, more girls may be encouraged to stay in school and complete their studies. Good hygiene habits inculcated from young age will also help to improve the overall health of India’s youth. This will eventually lead to having a healthy and strong workforce,” said Dr A. Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI.

BTMU has been working with various community partners across India in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Neemrana. BTMU has two themes for its Corporate Social Responsibility activities. The first is global environmental issues like global warming and biodiversity. The second is nurturing the next generation. This means addressing local or regional issues impacting society and its youth as a whole, including poverty and financial literacy.

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