



We Build

A HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INDIA NEWSLETTER

August 2025

From the National Director's desk



Dear Friends,

As I cross the milestone of completing one year as the National Director of Habitat for Humanity India, I am filled with deep gratitude for the communities we serve, the passionate volunteers who drive our work forward and the generous donors who continue to believe in the power of shelter to transform lives.

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of witnessing the profound impact a home can have on a family. It is more than bricks and mortar, it is about dignity, stability and the promise of a better tomorrow.

This year, we also celebrated the much-awaited return of our Volunteer Build Programme. Corporate professionals joined hands with future homeowners and helped build homes in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

A deeply powerful moment for me unfolded at a dedication ceremony in Tiruvallur, Tamil Nadu. After we handed over improved homes and sanitation units to 49 families from the Irula tribal

community, Mr. Ramesh, a homeowner and local leader shared, *"Dignity and respect matter to everyone. Sadly, as members of the Irula community, we have rarely been treated with such consideration. But this time, it was different. From labourers to the entire Habitat India team, everyone treated us with dignity and respect. Even the construction workers sought our permission before entering our homes. For the first time in our lives, we truly felt seen, valued and respected."*

As we look ahead, I feel incredibly hopeful. The strength of our nation lies in the well-being of every citizen and that begins with a safe, decent home. We invite each one of you to continue supporting our journey towards building a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

In partnership,
Anand Kumar Bolimera
National Director
Habitat for Humanity India



A home of her own: Dharamwati's story of strength and hope Aakera village, Rewari district, Haryana



Dharamwati and her daughters in front of their new home.

“It’s not just a house. It’s our home.”

With these words, Dharamwati, a widowed mother of four daughters, summed up what a safe and secure shelter means to her family.

For years, Dharamwati lived in a crumbling two-room structure in Aakera village, Rewari district, Haryana. The house shared with her elderly mother and daughters - Naina, Muskan, Khushi and Ayushi, offered little protection from the harsh weather.

“It was hardly a home. Rainwater leaked through the roof; the walls were damp and there was no proper kitchen or bathroom. We cooked in one corner while the bathroom was in the next room. I was constantly worried about cleanliness and hygiene,” she recalls.

With no sink, she had to wash utensils outside. Stray dogs would often rummage through the leftovers, increasing the risk of contamination and illness.

Despite these challenges, Dharamwati worked hard to keep her family afloat. As a school bus conductor earning ₹4,000 a month, supplemented by a widow’s pension of ₹7,000.



The place outside Dharamwati’s old house, where she used to do the dishes.

Every rupee had to stretch far. Yet her focus remained clear — her daughters’ education.

Investing in her daughters’ education left Dharamwati with almost nothing to repair or improve their living conditions. Keeping the family afloat meant housing always came last. “No matter how hard life is, my daughters deserve a chance,” she says.

A ray of hope

Everything changed when Habitat for Humanity India, in partnership with Max Estates – a leading real estate developer, began a housing project in Aakera village. Following a thorough



Dharamwati (Left) enjoys a quiet moment while her two daughters (Right) study in a separate room.

evaluation process, 25 families were selected for the first phase of the project. Dharamwati was one of them.

On 19th November 2024, newly constructed homes were handed over to 25 families at Aakera, in a handover ceremony in the presence of villagers and community leaders.

A new chapter begins

Dharamwati now wakes up in a home that is sturdy, well-lit and safe. The house features a proper kitchen, a hygienic bathroom, good ventilation and secure doors. There is even an open terrace.

“Now my daughters have a clean, peaceful place to study. I don’t worry about stray dogs or leaking roofs anymore. This is our safe space and that means everything to us,” Dharamwati says with a smile.

This project is part of Habitat for Humanity India’s housing initiative for 50 marginalised and underprivileged families in Rewari district, Haryana. Supported by Max Estates, it is being carried out in two phases. In the first phase, 25 homes were built in Aakera and the families have moved into their new homes. The second phase is now underway in Bhudla village, where homes are being built for another 25 families.

Scan the QR code to read the full story:





Gold-certified Green Homes: A milestone for Habitat for Humanity's climate-resilient housing



Homeowner Susama Das, in front of her new climate-resilient home.

Three homes built by Habitat India in Odisha have been awarded the prestigious 'NEST GOLD' rating by the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC). This recognition highlights Habitat for Humanity India's strong commitment to sustainable, affordable and climate-resilient housing for marginalised families.

The certified homes constructed in partnership with families from Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation and Jatni Municipality in Khordha district, were designed using green construction technologies that promote both environmental sustainability and disaster resilience.

Key features include:

1. Raised plinths to protect against flooding.
2. Thermal insulation for energy efficiency.
3. Solar panels for clean energy.
4. Rainwater harvesting systems.
5. Efficient water and waste management solutions.



Susama in front of her old house.

The IGBC, a part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), is a national authority promoting sustainable built environments. The 'NEST' rating system specifically evaluates affordable housing projects on parameters such as energy efficiency, water conservation, material use and occupant health.

This GOLD rating not only validates the quality and innovation of Habitat India's construction practices but also reinforces its vision of building a greener, more resilient future starting with the most vulnerable.

Scan the QR code to read Susama's story:





Impact Assessment: House repair and renovation project for Irula community

From November 2023 to October 2024, Habitat for Humanity India implemented a House Repair and Renovation project in Chengalpattu district, Tamil Nadu. The initiative improved the living conditions of 51 Irula tribal families by addressing critical housing needs and ensuring access to safe, decent and dignified shelter. To understand the project’s effectiveness and

long-term impact, Habitat for Humanity India’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) team conducted an evaluation in April 2025. The assessment measured outputs, outcomes, relevance, efficiency and overall impact, capturing the deeper, transformative changes experienced by homeowner families.

Key Highlights from the Impact Study
The word used by all homeowners to describe their Habitat home:

“SAFE”

100%

of families expressed satisfaction with the quality of repairs.

100%

of households said they felt safe and secure throughout the project.

96%

felt the repairs met their needs and were completed on time.

76%

reported increased dignity and acceptance within the community.



51 tribal families partnered with Habitat India to repair and renovate their old houses.



Mr. Anand Kumar Bolimera, National Director, Habitat for Humanity India, in conversation with the homeowners.



Vedachalam in front of his old house.



Poongodi, wife of Vedachalam in front of their newly repaired home.



Home equals dignity for the Irula community

Habitat for Humanity India improved the living conditions of 49 Irula tribal families in Gummidipoondi and Ponneri blocks in Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu by repairing their homes and building new sanitation units.

The families also participated in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and safeguarding training facilitated by Habitat India team through door-to-door visits, group discussions and community sessions.



Ramya's dream of starting a new life in their newly repaired home, has finally come true.

"I was pregnant when we began repairing our home. It was unsafe and we didn't have a toilet. Walking long distances for open defecation was dangerous. Today, we have a safe, secure home. We welcomed our newborn into this house and it truly feels like a new beginning."

**— Ramya, Homeowner,
Senjiamman Nagar, Gummidipoondi.**

"Dignity and respect matter to everyone. Sadly, as members of the tribal community, we have rarely been treated with such consideration. Earlier, when repairs were needed in our homes, the workers we hired often demanded that we step outside while they work, making us feel like outsiders in our own spaces. But this time, it was different.

From labourers to the entire Habitat for Humanity India team, everyone treated us with dignity and respect. Even the construction workers sought our permission before entering our homes. For the first time in our lives, we truly felt seen, valued and respected."

**- Ramesh, Homeowner and the village leader,
Senjiamman Nagar, Gummidipoondi.**



For Ramesh and his family, home equals dignity.

HOUSING DISASTER RESILIENCE AND RESPONSE

Rebuilding hope after the storm: Habitat India's disaster response

When floodwaters surged into the low-lying areas of Dhubri and the riverine settlements of Barpeta in Assam, families were caught off guard. Roofs collapsed. Walls gave way. Lives changed in a matter of hours. For many, all that remained was the will to survive and the hope that help would come.

Habitat for Humanity India, with support from Texas Instruments, helped 329 families with Emergency Shelter Kits (ESKs). Each kit contained essential tools and materials including a tarpaulin, rope, tie wire, hammer, nails, washers, a hoe, covering sheet and hand saw, enabling families to patch leaking roofs, reinforce damaged walls and reclaim a sense of normalcy.

In Kerala, these efforts were extended to support families affected by heavy rainfall, flooding and landslides. 697 families across Panamaram, Edavaka, Kottathara villages and the suburbs of Mananthavady and Sulthan Bathery taluka in Wayanad district were supported with shelter kits.

In Tamil Nadu, in response to Cyclone Fengal, Habitat India supported 1,206 families, impacting over 6,000 individuals across Villupuram district. The intervention reached some of the most marginalised communities, including the Irula tribal community across Koliyanur, Vikravandi, Thiruvennainallur, Kandamangalam and Kanai blocks.



Scan the QR code to read Sakthi's story:



"The shelter kit has been of great help to us. The tarpaulin protected our livestock during the rain. My son Deepak, a carpenter, now uses the handsaw for his work. We even used the wire and pliers to repair our bamboo walls."

— Priyabala Mondal, Barpeta, Assam.



Priyabala Mondal and her husband Mongla Mondal, use tools from the kit to repair the bamboo wall around their pond to prevent erosion.



CLIMATE ACTION

Lighting Lives with renewable energy



Newly installed solar panels at Zilla Parishad Pre-secondary School in Amravati district, Maharashtra.

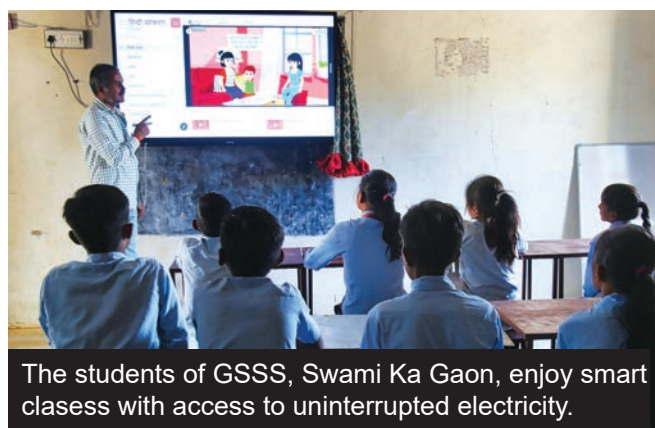
“Our students endured a lot. Studying in dark, overheated classrooms was difficult for them and we too faced challenges in managing school operations,” says Mr. Bhanwar Singh Rathod, Physical Training Instructor at Government Senior Secondary School (GSSS), Swami Ka Gaon, Barmer, Rajasthan.

But things changed with the installation of solar panels under the Lighting Lives initiative. “Today, we have power throughout the day,” shares Mr. Rathod.

“Our computer lab is running efficiently, digital classrooms are always in use and we can now use basic infrastructure like fans, lights, water pumps and coolers without interruption.”

The change is more than technical. It is deeply personal for students like Seema, a bright-eyed Class 9 student and the youngest of five siblings. Her home does not have a steady power supply. The classroom, now reliably lit and cooled by solar power, has become her sanctuary, a place where dreams like becoming an IAS officer can be pursued with vigour.

Even the school’s greenery has benefited. The once dry grounds are now watered regularly, thanks to solar-powered pumps. This is the quiet power of renewable energy, not just lighting up rooms but enabling potential.



The students of GSSS, Swami Ka Gaon, enjoy smart classes with access to uninterrupted electricity.

Climate change has a far-reaching impact on human life, with children often being among the most vulnerable. Recognising this challenge, Habitat for Humanity India in partnership with ReNew and HSBC decided to implement Lighting Lives, a CSR initiative. In the first two phases (2022-24), 88 schools were equipped with solar energy and 83 schools were equipped with digital labs in Gujarat, Karnataka and Rajasthan. Lighting Lives also raised awareness about climate change to nurture a new generation of young climate champions through a special curriculum. In phase three (2024-25), sustainable solar energy solutions have been established in 54 government schools in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The fourth phase of the intervention is underway in Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

Scan the QR code to read the full story:



The Golfing Fraternity champions the cause of housing at the 6th Habitat Charity Golf Tournament

The 6th edition of the Habitat for Humanity Charity Golf Tournament brought together 86 golfers, corporate leaders and celebrated sports personalities in support of Habitat's mission of building homes, communities and hope. Notable attendees included four-time Asian Tour-winning golfer and 2002 Arjuna Awardee Mr. Shiv Kapur and icons of Indian Cricket Mr. Murali Vijay, Mr. Murali Kartik and S. Badrinath. They were joined by prominent corporate leaders such as Mr. Gopal Ramakrishnan (Managing Director - Goodrich Maritime), Mr. Hemang Dharamshi (Managing Director - Dharamshi Securities), Mr. Arjun Nohwar (Country General Manager - India and South Asia, Warner Bros. Discovery) and Ms. Dierdre D'Cunha (Director - Teryair Equipment Pvt. Ltd.).

"We are using golf today as a medium to raise funds and awareness for a great cause. As a professional golfer, it gives me immense happiness to be able to give back and lend my support. I have witnessed the work that Habitat India has done throughout the years at close quarters. I have been part of some of their volunteer builds myself. I think it is great that we can use golf to be a force for good," reflected Mr. Shiv Kapur.

We would like to thank our event partners for making the event a success. We are thankful to our donors for supporting us on our mission of building homes, communities and hope.

This year's edition saw the participation of 86 golfers rallying to support Habitat for Humanity's vision of building a world where everyone has a decent place to live.



India's sporting icons Shiv Kapur (centre), Murali Vijay (right) and Murali Karthik (left) came together to support Habitat for Humanity India's 6th Charity Golf Tournament.



Scan the QR code to watch the highlights of the 6th Habitat Charity Golf Tournament:



Multi-stakeholder engagement in Andhra Pradesh



Snapshot from the multi-stakeholder meeting between Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Ltd., Habitat for Humanity India and other stakeholders.

At a multi-stakeholder engagement held on 23rd April 2025 in Vijayawada, Habitat for Humanity India joined hands with Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Ltd. (APSHCL) to explore ways of advancing the Government of India's flagship 'Housing for All' mission through the commendable 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana' (PMAY).

The event aimed to develop a roadmap for affordable housing in Vijayawada, Guntur, Bapatla and Eluru regions. It brought together green building leaders such as Indian Green Building Council, solar experts like Selco Foundation as well as housing finance corporations, community-based organisations and the technical team members of APSHCL to focus on enhancing affordable housing for economically disadvantaged families in the region.

Mr. Ajay Jain, IAS, Special Chief Secretary, Housing Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh welcomed this multi-stakeholder approach, aligning it with the state's broader vision of "Zero Poverty by 2029". He emphasised the urgency of completing approximately 7.32 lakh houses by December 2026.

Mr. Anand Kumar Bolimera, National Director of Habitat for Humanity India, reiterated the organisation's commitment to building a world where everyone has a decent place to live, complementing the Government of India's 'Housing for All' mission and highlighting the need for greater collaboration.

Home Equals: Standing with the *Invisible Billion*

1,325 people in India signed a petition to show their support for the 1.1 billion people living in informal settlements across the world. The petition was part of Habitat for Humanity's Invisible Billion campaign, which urged G7 countries, some of the world's most powerful economies to recognise adequate housing as a key international development priority.

Through this simple yet powerful act of solidarity, individuals in India stood with vulnerable families around the globe, echoing

Habitat's belief that safe shelter is foundational to human dignity, health and opportunity.

India is among the few countries in the world with a structured housing programme like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) which aims to ensure 'Housing for All' by providing affordable housing to millions of low-income families. Habitat for Humanity India complements these national efforts by helping poor, marginalised and vulnerable families build safe, decent and disaster-resilient homes.



Building more than homes: Habitat India's Volunteer Programme sparks a movement of compassion.

Till date over 56,000 individuals including corporate leaders, professionals, students and youth have joined Habitat for Humanity India's Volunteer Build Programme, lending their hands and hearts to build homes alongside families in need. After a brief pandemic-induced pause, the programme resumed this year with fresh energy and renewed purpose.

A new chapter of volunteer engagement: 2025

Pretium Enterprise Services (PES) India collaborated with Habitat India in the first volunteer build of 2025 in Hakki Pikki Colony, Bengaluru. 22 employees of Pretium worked shoulder to shoulder with tribal families, painting, carrying concrete blocks and helping them build sanitation units.

The momentum continued with 16 employees from Houlihan Lokey, a global investment bank, following suit in Palghar, Maharashtra, reaffirming that giving back is as vital as growing forward.

LEGACY BUILD 3.0

In March, Habitat India hosted a special Legacy Build in Bengaluru, bringing together 15 volunteers which included business leaders and international students from Japan. Led by Anthony Miller, long-time Habitat volunteer

and member of the Asia-Pacific Development Council, Habitat for Humanity International and Cecilia Melin, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Japan, the build was a five-day immersion in compassion and cultural exchange that helped 3 families from the Hakki Pikki tribal community build a home of their own.

"My family is looking forward to our new home. But the most excited is my granddaughter, who is expecting a baby. She will raise her child in a safe and secure home," said Parani, one of the future homeowners.

For Mr. Miller, it was his 17th global build with Habitat for Humanity. "Each build is a powerful reminder of the impact a home can have on a family. Housing transforms lives. This experience becomes even more meaningful when shared with my daughter and fellow volunteers," Mr. Miller shared.



Anthony Miller and Cecilia Melin at the build site in Hakki Pikki colony, Anekal, Bengaluru, Karnataka.



Volunteers in action at the build location in Anekal, Bengaluru, Karnataka.



Samsung Village #13: A model of long-term engagement

In February and April 2025, Habitat India welcomed a total of 47 volunteers from Samsung C & T Korea and Samsung C & T India to Saware village, Palghar as part of the Samsung Village #13 Project. In this project Habitat India is building 15 homes for the Warli tribal community and improving sanitation units in three government schools.

Through hands-on participation, the volunteers gained a deeper understanding of the housing need and the impact of decent shelter on

education, health and dignity. The build also included WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) awareness sessions for children and families to encourage long-term behavioural change.

“Through our Volunteer Builds, we don’t just build houses. We build a shared vision of a better, more inclusive future. Thank you to all the volunteers who inspire action and drive sustainable change,” said Anand Kumar Bolimera, National Director, Habitat for Humanity India.



Teamwork in action: Volunteers from Samsung C & T Korea come together for a picture at the build site.



Volunteers from Samsung C & T India in action at the build site in Palghar, Maharashtra.



“It was truly an amazing experience. We are from the construction industry, but today we experienced what it actually feels like to get our hands dirty and move that brick. It feels good to know we are contributing to building someone’s dream home and I gave my best today.”

- Meenal, Samsung C & T India.

“It felt so good to see everyone coming together to build our home. They carried bricks and helped build its walls alongside us. We truly enjoyed working with these volunteers from Samsung C & T.”

– Gurunath, Habitat homeowner, Saware, Palghar.



Why Volunteer?

A day on a Habitat for Humanity's build site is a transformative experience. Volunteers work with communities and form bonds that go beyond cultural or geographic boundaries.

**Every hand that lifts a brick helps raise a wall of dignity.
Every hour spent in service helps rewrite the future of a family.**

Join Us

Whether you are a corporation looking to strengthen your CSR and employee engagement, a school eager to instil social responsibility or a young individual wanting to make a difference, Habitat India's Volunteer Build Programme welcomes you.



Mr. Anand Kumar Bolimera, National Director, Habitat for Humanity India, builds alongside the international volunteers at Legacy Build 3.0.

Together, we can build more than homes.

We can build communities.

We can build hope.



Volunteers from Houlihan Lokey in action at the build site in Palghar, Maharashtra.



Volunteers interact with Ms. Parani and her grandson's wife, Ms. Somya, at the build site.



Volunteers from Pretium Enterprise Services kicked off the first Build of 2025 by contributing to the construction of sanitation units built in partnership with the Hakki Pikki communities in Anekal, Bengaluru.

Scan the QR code to watch the highlights of Legacy Build 3.0:



IN CONVERSATION WITH MS. MUSKAN LUND, HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INDIA VOLUNTEER

From her first volunteer build with Habitat India as a wide-eyed 13-year-old student to now being a bold young changemaker at 23, Muskan's journey has been one of deep empathy, purpose and quiet determination.

Recently, Muskan's commitment was recognised on a global platform when she was awarded a \$4,000 grant at the Habitat Youth Assembly 2025. The Habitat Youth Assembly is a global platform set up by Habitat for Humanity that brings together young changemakers to share, refine and present ideas for addressing housing challenges. Selected participants compete for the Habitat Youth Solutions Grant, which includes a stipend to implement their innovative and community-driven housing solutions.

Muskan's project 'Chhatt Shakti' is a youth-led solution that addresses the extreme heat in low-income homes, while empowering women to be part of the solution.

As we celebrate this milestone, we sat down with Muskan to revisit her journey, the spark that started it all, her experiences on the ground and the vision she holds for the future of housing and youth leadership in India.



Muskan was awarded a \$4,000 grant at the Habitat Youth Assembly 2025 - a global platform set up by Habitat for Humanity International.



Muskan at the Habitat Youth Assembly 2025, representing and advocating for her project 'Chhatt Shakti'.

"Habitat has been one of the greatest blessings in my life. Not because of recognition or visibility, but because it has taught me the value of service. It has pushed me to do better, to feel deeply, to grow as a human being.

When you are doing something that feels so aligned with your purpose, when your work brings you joy and peace, that is when you know you are truly home."



Muskan with Dr. Roland Smith, former Trustee of Habitat for Humanity India, at the Habitat Young Leaders Build Conference held in Mumbai in June 2017, in partnership with the Centre for Creative Leadership.

**Scan the QR code to
read the full interview.**





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