

# Swachh Bharat Abhiyan: Issues and Challenges



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## Abstract

Cleanliness is the stark reality which the nation can't ignore any further. Clean Initiative is often seen as a developed way of life. Mahatma Gandhi considered sanitation to be more important than Independence. He used cleanliness as a potent tool to integrate larger section of society during the freedom struggle. But his dream of a clean India is still unfulfilled. Independence came with inherent challenges and contradictions. As successive governments grappled with larger issues of development, the cleanliness agenda took a backseat. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is set to provide the much needed acceleration to become a developed nation by 2025. It represents the collective inspiration of nation to transform progress beyond mind and mindset. This paper tends to create a thought and later attempts on implementing in an actual manner so that the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan launched by Government of India this year, can be a reality for the future. If it is successful it can provide as a best example of Public private partnership. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan tries to pool and integrate every effort under one umbrella. Government agencies, non Government organizations, community leaders, religious groups, students, children and celebrities have come together in a unified drive on cleanliness.

**Keywords:** Awareness, Open Defecation, PPP, Sanitation, Toilets, Waste Management.

## Introduction

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a national campaign established by the Government of India. This campaign is covering 4041 statutory towns in order to clean roads, streets and development of infrastructure. This mission is targeted to solve the sanitation problem as well as better waste management all over the country by creating sanitation facilities to all. This campaign was launched on October 2, 2014 (the 145th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi) by targeting its completeness in 2019 in his 150th birth anniversary. The mission has been implemented to cover all the rural and urban areas. Rural sanitation is vested within the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS), while urban areas fall under the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD). School sanitation has been handed over to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The overall project cost, for both rural and urban areas has been estimated at Rs 1,96,009 crore that will help in construction of 11.11 crore toilets across the country. Out of this, Rs 62000 crore will be spent in urban India for construction of toilets. The bigger allocation of Rs 134000 crores would be the rural component.

Swachh Bharat Mission for the attainment of objectives must be perpetually followed. It is very essential for the people in India to really get the feeling of physical, social mental and intellectual well being. It is to make living status advance in India in real means which can be started by bringing all over cleanliness.

Elimination of open defecation is the main aim of improving access to sanitation. It is also a proposed indicator for the Sustainable Development Goals. India is the country with the highest number of people practicing open defecation. Most of it occurs in rural areas, where the prevalence is estimated at 65 per cent of the population. High levels of open defecation is usually correlated with high levels of child mortality, undernutrition and poverty. The foremost reason for the open defecation is that the toilets are not available or not clean and safe. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan aims to eradicate open defecation by 2019. Abhiyan is an effort to transform sanitation by constructing 11.11 crore toilets, eliminate manual scavenging and sensitizing rural folks to the benefits of living healthier lives reducing diseases and death which arises out of bad management of solid waste. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a welcome step

to the clean and green India till 2019. The need of sanitation is of utmost importance. Although the Central Government is providing the resources within its mean, the task of total sanitation can not be achieved without the support of all. It is the citizen involvement which makes any initiative successful.

#### Need for the Study

Cleanliness is most important for physical well being and a healthy environment. It has bearing on the public and personal hygiene. It is essential for everyone to learn about cleanliness, hygiene, sanitation and the various diseases that are caused due to poor hygienic condition. The habits learned at young age get embedded into one's personality. The municipality corporations or semi government bodies of most of our cities are finding it difficult to manage the cleanliness, sanitation and hygienic conditions in a most appropriate manner. This paper, proposes that how for the society can be benefitted through the active participation of government, semi government institutions, non government organization and of public for the proper development of our towns, villages and cities keeping in view the fundamental aspect of cleanliness which should be of international level.

#### Objectives of the Study

The objectives that have been kept in mind while drafting this paper are as follows :

1. To analyse the area of open defecation.
2. To find various stakeholders and to rope them in a most appropriate way.
3. To find the ways of funding sources for the cleanliness drive.
4. To maintain proper check and counterbalancing steps for the overall impact of this drive on the national level.
5. To find current level of respondent participation and effectiveness of Swachh Bharat drive.

#### Methodology

The research methodology towards producing this paper is mainly based on the secondary data and own thoughts and ideas towards this national Abhiyan. Help has been taken from various research papers, literature reviews, websites, journals and newspapers. Limitations are bound to be there in a form of non coordination of many ideas towards the ideas of experts and theoretical nature of this paper.

#### Literature Review

The endeavor of the Government is to turn the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan into a mass movement requiring not just toilets, but also a change in behaviour and mindset of people (The Hindu ,October 4,2014). The report "Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water: 2015 Update and MDG Assessment" released by the UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) said in India, 44 per cent population (394 million) is defecating in open in 2015. The report also points out that, one in every three (2.4 billion people) across the globe are still without sanitation facilities, including 946 ,million people who defecate in open. Ahmed Junaid (2014) points out, extreme poverty and lack of sanitation are statistically linked; eliminating open defecation is said to be an important part of development efforts. Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP2014) points out that high level of

open defecation in country is usually correlated with a high child mortality, as well as high level of undernutrition, high level of poverty and large disparities between the rich and poor. Shailja Badra and Vivek Sharma (March 2014) writes according to government estimates, urban India generates 68.8 million tonnes of solid waste per year (1.88 lakh tonnes everyday). It is estimated to touch 160 million tonnes by 2041. One third of the garbage in urban areas are untreated. About 14 million tonnes is left to rot. The problem is compounded by about 38 billion litres of sewage generated everyday in 498 Tier 1 cities (2009 figures). Vijay Kumar, R.K. Pandit write that in most of the cities in India, the scientific and systematic storage of waste at source is not in practice. The waste is normally thrown in nearby vacant areas. Even in case of regular cleaning by municipality workers, the city can not be kept clean for more than 2-3 hours. Drains are clogged because of continuous dumping. There is no formal organized system of segregation of biodegradable and non biodegradable waste. Some international studies have tried to understand the effect of cleanliness on environment. Michael Berry found that human manages their life by managing the environment. The Partnership for Clean Air Inc.(PLC) in Philippines found that when institutions come together, they play a big role in cleaning air of pollutants. It suggests governments to keep a check on pollution.

#### Sanitation goes Main Stream

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan or the clean India campaign is the biggest ever cleanliness drive in the country. That among the other cleanliness issues the country has a massive problem of open defecation. Approx 72 % of rural population still defecate in open., This has led to various other problems like untimely death of children, spread of infections and diseases and most importantly rapes of girls and women who go to deserted places to relieve themselves. India has a population of more than 1.2 billion of people, out of which nearly 600 million people, which constitutes 55 percent has no access to toilets. Even in areas where there are toilets in rural India (32 percent of rural households, as per the 2012 data) there are no running water facilities available. Slum dwellers in the cities have no access to running water supply and also toilets.

Considering this grave problem of rural sanitation in India and open defecation, the then UPA Government had launched "Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan" in 1999. In this Abhiyan, a target was set for universal household sanitation coverage by 2012. This was an integral part of the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) launched in 1991. However, the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan did not create the desired impact.

Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan has now been restructured by the present Government as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan with the objective of making India a 'clean India' by stopping the problem of open defecation, building up of toilets for all households, providing running water supply, treating of solid and liquid waste in proper manner. This drive also includes cleaning of roads, pavements and clearing of encroachment in unauthorized areas. Above all the project aims at creating awareness among people about the need for proper sanitation and hygienic

facilities, and urge the nationals to come forward and take the responsibility of cleaning India.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, with the help of the Government of India, political parties, Non Government organizations (NGOs), corporations and with active people's participation, is stated to be completed in 2019. The Prime Minister led the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission on Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary (October 2, 2014). He quoted the words of Mahatma Gandhi- "Sanitation is more important than Independence". The Government of India wants to fulfill the dream of Mahatma Gandhi and usher a clean India by 2019, which will mark the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

For the better execution, the Abhiyan has two sub-missions

1. Swachh Bharat Mission (rural)
2. Swachh Bharat Mission (urban)

Gramin Swachh Bharat Mission is a mission implementing cleanliness programmes in the rural areas. This campaign is aimed to make rural areas free of open defecation till 2019 for which the cost has been estimated is 1034000 crore rupees for constructing approximately 1100000 toilets in the country. There is a big plan of converting waste into bio-fertilizers and useful energy forms. This mission involves the participation of Gram Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad. Following are the objectives of Gramin Swachha Bharat Mission:

1. To improve quality of life of people living in the rural areas.
2. To motivate people to maintain sanitation in rural areas to complete the vision of Swachh Bharat by 2019.
3. To motivate local working bodies (such as communities, Panchayati Raj Institutions, etc.) to make available the required sustainable sanitation facilities.
4. Develop advance environmental sanitation systems manageable by the communities specially to focus on solid and liquid waste management in the rural areas.

Under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan for the rural areas, the ministry of rural development will provide Rs.20 Lakhs to each village each year of the next five year. Under this programme the government has fixed the unit cost of individual house latrines at Rs. 12000 so that ample water supply can be provided for cleaning, bathing and washing. An estimated Rs.1, 34,000 crore will be spend by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for the programme.

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in urban areas aims to cover almost 104 crore households in order to provide them 2.6 lakhs of public toilets, 2.5 lakhs of community toilets together with the solid waste management in every town. Community toilets have been planned to be built in the residential areas where availability of individual household toilets is difficult and public toilets at designated locations including bus stations, tourist places, railway stations, markets etc. cleanliness programme in the urban areas (around 4401 towns) have been planned to be completed over five years till 2019. The costs of programme are set like Rs.7,366 crore on solid waste management, Rs.1,828 crore on public awareness,

Rs. 655 crore on community toilets, Rs. 4165 crore on individual household toilet etc. Programmes which have been targeted to be completed are complete removal of open defecation, converting unsanitary toilets, into flush toilets, eradicating manual scavenging, bring behavioural changes among public and solid waste management.

### Swachhata in India : a Challenging Task

Swachh Bharat Mission is very necessary to run continuously in India until it gets its goal. It is very essential for the people in India to really get the feeling of physical, mental, social and intellectual well being. It is to make living status advance in India in real means which can be started by bringing all over cleanliness. However Swachhata in India is very challenging task. According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), urban India generates about 47 million tones of solid waste every year. It is also reported that more than 75 percent of sewage or waste water disposal is not treated in India. Recycling solid waste is a big problem. These issues need to be addressed now, so that a major crisis can be prevented in the future. In rural India, lack of adequate sanitation is a huge challenge. Another major challenge is to change the mindset of the people.

### Progress Report

Swachh Bharat Missions launched by the Centre has completed one year. A review of the year long progress of the five year Swachh Bharat Mission suggests it fail to match the high decibel campaigning that has been the trademark of the flagship mission launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 2, 2014. So, as to put an end to open defecation and adopt better solid waste management practices, the one year target for urban areas was to finish constructing 25 lakh individual toilets, 1 lakh community and public toilets, achieve 100 percent collection and transportation of waste in 1,000 cities and cent percent processing and disposal of waste in 100 cities. While launched with great fare, the mission has been facing challenges of implementation-

1. The focus of the sanitation component is completely infrastructure based i.e. on building toilets. It does not involve the community or plan in a holistic manner for ensuring case of usage to ensure continued use.
2. The implementation of the programme is not as bottom up as it must be community led participation is minimal when it comes to building and using toilets.
3. The programme is not demand driven i.e. government has prescribed the kind of toilet to be build and other criteria without taking the local situations in considerations. Water intensive toilets in arid and semi arid areas will not be acceptable to people.
4. The government has not identified the reasons behind the failures of earlier missions, so no feed back has been obtained from the ground level, which is most important aspect of the policy making.
5. While promoting the mission, maximum publicity has been on cleanliness. Hence an opportunity to publicize the more important component i.e. sanitation was lost.

6. There has been a lack of planning in the execution of the project, as no one in particular in any institution is held responsible for the task of everyday cleaning, hence in such a situation there lies no accountability and such moral obligation is totally ignored.
7. Consideration that cleaning work shall be done by those who have been doing it since ages.
8. There is a perception that this movement is nothing but a political card, so there is a lack of interest by some people.
9. Lack of dustbins in public places and also proper disposal of waste is also a big problem, mere transfer of waste from one place to another is not a solution.
10. Overemphasis on infrastructure creation rather than changing the mindset of people. People in India are habitual of littering, spit, defecate and urinate wherever they feel like, until and unless this habit will change then only cleanliness drive can gain momentum.
11. Ethically even the representatives of particular regions are not serious about the whole campaign, so as a result of that, no one is there to look after the progress of that region, which accumulates to the inefficiency of the whole campaign on the notional level.

### Conclusions

The focus on Swachh Bharat Campaign attempts to gauge the mood of the country. The campaign brings focus to the pressing transformational need of the nation. The change is perceptible as India embarks on its journey to create a clean and hygienic environment. But orthodox mindset is a hindrance to the drive. Cleanliness is still considered a job performed by a specific set of persons. The alignment of children and youth in such campaigns creates a ripple effect. Team work and patriotism are values which the government wishes to enunciate among students and ordinary citizens. Segregation of wet and dry waste is a step forward. Solid waste management will have to be streamlined to make it as effective as in developed countries. Voluntary social work on river banks is worth considering in the light of the assertion that they have become a major hazard for clean environment. Sewage and other waste are dumped in rivers causing irreparable damage to riverbeds, fishes and life in water. Respondents advocated a ban on plastic. It has been the view of many that ban is not a piecemeal initiative. It requires a comprehensive amendment and rigorous penalties. It shall require a shift in public policy. The active involvement of celebrities lends credence to the drive.

Mere launching a programme is not enough, results matter. It is not only the government who can make it a success, people's participation is of utmost importance. Also a detailed blue print should be prepared for implementing the programme.

### Suggestions

In order to tackle the problems faced, following measures can be suggested-

1. SBA has a top down model of instruction, rather what is needed is a bottom up approach. There shall be regular community meetings regarding

spreading awareness, importance and benefits of cleanness.

2. There should be participative and decentralized governance i.e. higher involvement of local governance institutions in planning and monitoring for the progress of mission.
3. Sustainable practices such as vermi compost formation/biogas formation shall be there in house as in the backyards.
4. Drainage channels in urban areas are often clogged and open in many places, there should be clear cut drainage channels.
5. There should be a garbage site with proper waste disposal mechanism.
6. Hygiene practices and its importance should be taught in schools and at local level.
7. There should be sustained involvement of multiple stake holders. While it was heartening to see celebrities and Government officials sweeping the streets on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, it is important to ensure that the interest of all stake holders (politicians, bureaucrats, NGOs, private enterprises, funders and communities) is sustained and they work towards this goal in a concerted fashion.
8. It is extremely important that the government realizes that merely constructing more toilets is not going to be worthwhile the toilets need to be usable and for that quality of construction as well as operation and maintenance needs to be robust. The latter needs ownership from people but also innovative models like involving private sector enterprises to maintain community/public toilets on a fee basis. Water availability in toilets is also need to be ensured. Moreover, solution for collecting and recycling waste are also essential. Thus, a comprehensive package of interventions is the need of the hour, as opposed to focusing primarily on toilet construction.
9. Penalties and punishments should be there for polluters.
10. Proper awareness about the comprehensive benefits associated with the mission should be advertised and training to the implementation agencies for proper implementation of provisions should be given.
11. Efforts should be made to keep the tempo high for rest of the period of the mission. Corporates should be encouraged to take lead. Education must be imparted efficiently to the uneducated and illiterate people to change their every day habits of littering, open defecation, mission against manual scavenging.
12. Success of this mission depends on efficient government machineries along with public participation. Effective coordination mainly between state government and local government with the assistance of central government alongwith public participation is required for the success.

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