

ROLE OF SWACHH BHARATH MISSION IN SANITATION OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Swachh Bharat Mission i.e. Clean India Mission, a national level campaign, recently launched by the Government of India is a major step towards the protection of degrading environment. The objectives of the campaign include elimination of open defecation, conversion of insanitary toilets to pour flush toilets, eradication of manual scavenging and above all to bring about a behavioural change in people regarding healthy sanitation practices and to ensure public participation in achieving these objectives. There are some opportunities in the form of waste management through biogas/Domestic biogas plants and providing scientific and visual proof of disease transmission. Changes in administration, recycling solid waste, sustainability of interest and finally to change the mindsets of the people are the potential threats.

INTRODUCTION

Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan was launched on 2nd October, 2014, at Rajghat, New Delhi, and the place where Mahatma Gandhi, revered as the Father of Nation was cremated. The Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi launched the programme by cleaning a road using a broom himself. The programme spread over 4041 towns aims to clean roads and other public infrastructure. The Centre decided to spend about Rs. 2 lakh crores on this five year plan. For the purpose of promotion, the Government made sure that at least 30 lakh central government employees and thousands of school and college students took the oath for the programme. National icons including business tycoon Mr. Anil Ambani, Bollywood superstar Mr. Salman Khan and cricket legend Mr. Sachin Tendulkar are chosen as ambassadors for this programme.

Sceptics see the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan as BJP's way of re-returning the favour. However, due to the way the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan has been marketed, it becomes difficult to look at it merely as a political gimmick. This paper thus looks into the possible drawbacks of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan and analyse as to whether it can actually do the job it intends to accomplish. It contains several thoughts and anecdotes from Gandhi's life, extracted from several books, including his Autobiography. The first glimpse of Gandhi's rejection of orthodoxy finds mention in his Autobiography, when he questions his mother, who forbade him to touch an 'untouchable'. He was instructed to have a bath if he had touched an untouchable in his school or seek out a Muslim and touch him, for two 'untouchables' cancel each other in impurity. As told once, a scavenger by name Uka, whose duty included clearing out night soil of the house hold and clean the court yard came in physical contact with him, which his mother saw from a window .Gandhi argued and quoted Passages from scriptures stating that the sacred scriptures did not approve of treating some human beings as untouchables. Though in some instances he had to comply with the orders of his mother or other elders, his inner being never accepted their logic of someone being treated as

'untouchables'. The rebellious spirit would grow stronger with the advancing years, till it became the voice of his conscience, transforming itself into the voice of the nation. (Reference: Speech at Suppressed Classes Conference, Ahmedabad, Young India (27.4.1921 and 4.5.1921). In South Africa, he took up the cause of the Indians against racial discrimination. He however observed that while the Indian merchants and other free Indians feel humiliated at their ill treatment by the White Europeans, they themselves as a class were no better in their relationship with the illiterate Indian indentured labourers, who were working in semi slavery conditions in the Natal plantations. When Gandhiji took up the Indian cause, he was painfully made aware by the Europeans, of the unclean habitats in which the Indians lived and their shabby treatment of their own illiterate brethren. While defending Indians against such false propaganda, he accepted such criticisms, which in his opinion were true. He spoke to the Indian community on the urgent need to improve their public image on sanitation and untouchability. It was further alleged that the indentured Indians who had migrated and settled in Natal were pariahs in their own country; the poor, the downtrodden and of low caste. If their own countrymen treated them as pariahs, why they should seek parity in an alien country? "The truth burst upon his mind with the force of revelation that so long as India allowed a section of her people to be treated as pariahs, so long must be her sons prepared to be treated as pariahs abroad. To destroy the twin evil of untouchability and insanitation became his passion. So seared was his soul that for the treatment meted out to the outcastes, he ultimately took to scavenging, declaring that India's independence could wait but not the eradication of the curse of untouchability. Writes Pyarelal in his biography of Gandhi. (Reference: Mahatma Gandhi Volume 1 Page 478) Gandhiji records, "The charge had often been made that the Indian was slovenly in his habits and did not keep his house and surroundings clean. . . . But I had some bitter experiences. I saw that I could not so easily count on the help of the community in getting it to do its own duty, as I could in claiming for it rights. At some places I met with insults, at other with polite indifference. It was too much for people to bestir themselves to keep their surroundings clean. To expect them to find money for the work was out of the question. These experiences taught me, better than ever before, that without infinite patience it was impossible to get the people to do any work. It is the reformer who is anxious for the reform, and not society, from which he should expect nothing better than opposition, abhorrence and even mortal persecution." (Reference Chapter XI of Part 3 of Autobiography.) Gandhiji visited India in 1896 after stay in South Africa. In June, plague broke out in Bombay. Gandhiji was in Rajkot then he was inducted in the Sanitary Committee of Rajkot. The committee went on daily rounds to inspect the houses of the residents with special attention to latrines. It was found that the latrines of the rich were the most unclean. "They were dark and stinking and reeking with filth and worms." To improvements suggested by the Committee, "The upper classes raised numerous objections And in most cases it was not carried out." Gandhiji further records, "The committee had to inspect the untouchables' quarters also. Only one member of the committee was ready to accompany me there. To the rest it was something preposterous to visit those quarters, still more so to inspect their latrines. But for me those quarters were an agreeable surprise. . . . I asked them to let us inspect their latrines. 'Latrines for us!' they

exclaimed in astonishment. 'We go out and perform our functions out in the open. Latrines are for you big people'. Gandhiji records that the houses of the poor were clean and tidy compared to the houses of rich. In Rajkot people knew him as a son and a grandson of the Dewans (Prime Minister) of the State and yet for Gandhiji this was neither a hindrance nor a shame. In the year 1901 while on his second visit to India, Gandhiji attended the Congress session in Calcutta. He found the same indifference for sanitation. There were only a few latrines and the rush was big. He records, "I pointed it out to the volunteers. They said point-blank: 'That is not our work; it is the scavenger's work.' I asked for a broom. The man stared at me in wonder. I procured one and cleaned the latrine." He however could not persuade others to do the same. The delegates were even using their residential quarters as their toilets without the latrines. The sad experience of Calcutta Congress session burnt into him. Later when he had taken control of the Congress, he organized a party of two thousand volunteers for doing scavenging work in Haripura Congress session, which had men and women from all castes, including upper caste. He had finally torpedoed the caste barrier at least in one area; others bastions of age old evil practices were to fall one by one in the years to come. (Reference: Bahuroopee Gandhi by Anu Bandopadhyay page 24 edition 1964) .

Sanitation programmes- post -independence era

The Central Rural Sanitation Programme was launched in 1986 by the then Prime Minister late Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. Its major objectives were to improve the general sanitation standards and reduce open defecation. The programme was re launched by an NDA government, under the leadership of Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in 1999 as Total Sanitation Campaign. It had similar objectives and was therefore seen as more of a political move. The Congress returned the favour in 2012 by renaming Total Sanitation Scheme as Nirmal Bharat Abhiyaan

Needless to say, India even today faces a plethora of problems when it comes to sanitation and cleanliness. This massive problem not only directly effects the scenic beauty of the country, but also has other far reaching effects like making India a less attractive tourist destination. The biggest problem is open defecation. According to the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO) 69th round (Key Indicators of Drinking Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Housing Condition, July 2012-December 2012), 59.4 per cent of rural India and 8.8% of urban India have no sanitation facilities. In other words, 49.8% of Indians defecate in the open.(2011 census). In this regard, India unfortunately triumphs some of the poorest countries viz. Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, etc. However, it is even more shocking that Indians give a sort of traditional preference to open defecation. A new study shows that even in 40% of households with a working latrine, there is at least one member who defecates in the open.

Poor water supply and sanitation are other pressing issues. Due to poor water supply and sanitation, about 600,000 children under age of five years die. Only 12% of rural households have a latrine connected to piped sewer system. Further, inadequate infrastructure to manage the waste remains one of the biggest hindrances in the accomplishment of PM Modi's dreams. Less than 6% of the cities with a population in excess of 1, 00,000 have adequate mechanisms to handle and safely dispose off their own waste. Here comes the role of the

cleanliness workers who carry human excreta on their heads. Cleaning activities also include sweeping the roads, cleaning dry and water latrines, cleaning gutters, manholes and canals, scavenging garbage, etc. The most disgraceful public cleaning activity is cleaning of dry latrines. Still millions of people in India, carry human excreta on their heads as a part of their routine job. This work is typically restricted among a few Dalit communities thus enhancing their social down troddenness.

Census 2011 also indicates that only 32.7% of urban households are connected to a piped sewer system whereas 38.2% dispose off their wastes into septic tanks and about 7% into pit latrines. This shows that there is a large chunk of households which have onsite arrangements. However it is not clear on how the waste is disposed off from these installations. It also shows that about 50 lakh pit latrines are insanitary (have no slabs or are open pits); 13 lakh are service latrines – of which 9 lakh toilets dispose faeces directly into drains, 2 lakh latrines of insanitation coverage as per census 2011:

HIGHLIGHTS OF SWACH BHARATH MISSION IN SANITATION OF INDIA

A Rapid Survey on Swachhta Status was conducted by the NSSO during May-June 2015 alongside its regular 72nd Round (July 2014-June 2015) survey covering 3788 villages and 2907 urban blocks. The number of households surveyed was 73,176 in rural India and 41,538 in urban India. The survey aims to give a snapshot of the situation on the availability/accessibility of

- Toilets, solid waste and liquid waste management at sample village/ward and household levels aggregated at State and country levels. Out of the 3788 villages surveyed, 13.1% villages in India were found to have
- Community toilets out of the sample villages, at all India level, 1.7% villages were found to be having the community toilets but not using them. 82.1% of all the community toilets available in the villages were being used for defecation or washing purpose. From the 2907 sample UFS blocks surveyed at all India level, 42.0% wards were found to
- Have community/public toilets. At all India level, 1.6% wards were found to be having the community/public toilets but not using them. In 54.9% of the villages having community toilets, cleaning was being done by the
- Persons employed by the panchayat or on contract payment. In 17.0% villages, it was being done by the residents themselves. However, 22.6% villages were such where the community toilets were not being cleaned. In urban areas, cleaning of community/public toilets was being done by the persons
- Employed by the local municipal body in 73.1% wards having these toilets. 12.2% wards were such where the cleaning was being done by the persons employed by the residents' welfare association. However, community/public toilets in 8.6% wards were not being cleaned by anybody. 36.8% wards in urban areas reported to have a proper liquid waste disposal system for

- Community/public toilet 36.7% villages had pakki nali and 19.0% villages had katchi nali as drainage arrangement
- For waste water coming out of the rural households. 44.4% villages had no drainage arrangement. 56.4% wards reported to have sewer network for disposal of liquid waste.
- 78.1% wards reported to have a system of street cleaning.
- 64.2% wards were found to have a dumping place for solid waste. These solid waste dumping places were cleaned every day in case of 48.2% wards, on a weekly basis in case of 37.7% wards and on a monthly basis in case of 9.3% wards. However, 4.9% wards were such where the solid waste dumping place was not cleaned. In rural areas, 50.5% of the households kept the garbage at a specified place outside their
- Own house, 24.4% households disposed of the garbage in the nearby agriculture field, 5.5% households kept it at the common place outside the house, 4.4% households disposed of the garbage in the biogas plant or manure pit whereas 15.1% households threw it around the house. In rural areas, 45.3% households reported to have sanitary toilets.
- In urban areas, 88.8% households reported to have sanitary toilets.
- In rural India for the households having sanitary toilet, percentage of persons using
- Household/community toilet was 95.6%. ii In urban India for the households having sanitary toilet, the percentage of persons using
- Household/community/public toilet was 98.7%. In rural India, 42.5% households were found to have access to water for use in toilet.
- In urban India, 87.9% households were found to have access to water for use in toilets.
- In rural areas, the percentage of persons going for open defecation was estimated to be
- 52.1%. In urban India, the percentage of persons going for open defecation was estimated to be
- 7.5%. In rural areas, 55.4% households contributed to open defecation. This percentage in urban
- Areas were 8.9%.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To examine the historical context sanitation in India.
2. To examine implementation of Swach Bharat Mission in the state of A.P&Telangana
3. To examine the impact of Swach Bharath in Both States
4. To analysis the public awareness about sanitation
5. To offer some suggestion for better sanitation in India

CONCLUSION:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched one of his most ambitious projects, the 'Swach Bharat Abhiyan', a mission to clean India. Even after longstanding efforts to address the challenge of open defecation, the situation in India stubbornly remains unchanged. Part of the reason for this is because many people in rural India actually prefer open defecation to using

affordable latrines. Efforts to reduce open defecation include awareness raising (for example via the UN World Toilet Day at a global level), behaviour change campaigns, increasing political will as well as demand for sanitation. Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) campaigns have placed a particular focus on ending open defecation by "triggering" the communities themselves into action and let us hope that the recently launched SBM will further help to resolve the problem. Narendra Modi's ambitious project 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' has certainly changed the mindset of the masses to a considerable extent.

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