



APPRIASAL OF SWATCH BHARATH ABHIYAAN - A STUDY

***DR. G. PARVATHI**

Associate Professor, Dept of Political Science & Public Administration, Yogi Vemana University,
Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh-516005

ABSTRACT

India faces significant challenges regarding poor sanitation and open defecation, with over 60 percent of the global population practicing open defecation residing in the country. As of the 2011 census, 53.1 percent of households lacked access to toilets, particularly affecting rural areas where the percentage rose to 69.3 percent, while urban areas stood at 18.6 percent without proper sanitation facilities. To combat this issue, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on October 2, 2014. This nationwide cleanliness campaign aimed to achieve universal sanitation coverage, addressing the pressing concerns of open defecation and inadequate access to sanitation facilities across the country. The present study investigates the performance of Swatch Bharath, looks into future prospects and makes recommendations for its effective implementation

INTRODUCTION

Way back in late 1980s, the then government constructed housing colony for SC Community in a village in Anantapuram district with built in Toilets. As a child I remember, the beneficiaries demolishing the toilets without a second thought of preserving them at least for future use. They converted it into a multipurpose Room. Village People then discussed with disgust “How the Hell one can Eat and Defecate under the same Roof”. But today roughly after 30 years one can see a sea change in the attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of the people towards Toilet. It has now become a necessity. This change can be attributed to Swatch Bharath Mission to some extent and to the living conditions of the people to some extent. One can literally see the beneficiaries fighting with the concerned authorities for sanction of Individual Household Toilets or for release of funds after construction.

The other side of the coin is, during regular discussion in the PG Class of 25 students on SBM as a part of Policy paper, to a question whether everyone has a Toilet at home, 6 replied NO. This is to be taken seriously as a P.G student is well aware of the consequences of open defecation. Here rises the need for performance appraisal of the much boasted SBM.

Cleanliness is next to Godliness. India- the land of Holiness lacks Cleanliness. Overflowing drains, open garbage dumps, littered streets, Open defecation are common sites in India. Even after seven decades of Independence, India could not achieve total sanitation, hygiene and safe drinking water which are vital for healthy, quality and dignified living. Poor sanitation has a momentous impact on the social and economic conditions of the individual and family in particular and the nation in general. Unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation and hygiene are responsible for Water Borne disease likes Cholera, Typhoid, Jaundice, Diarrhoea etc. Mosquitoes thrive on garbage dumps, open drains, littered surroundings causing Dengue and Malaria which are playing havoc with lives. According to WHO Statistics, yearly 19.9 crores of population in India are suffering with Diarrhoea. Diarrhoea is one of the major reasons for death of children below 5 yrs age in India. Disease is a huge burden on person’s economic, social and political life. Even government is investing huge money to eradicate disease. A prominent study, often cited, evaluated the economic repercussions of insufficient sanitation in India (WSP 2008). It revealed that the collective economic consequences of inadequate sanitation in 2006 totaled Rs. 2.44 trillion, representing 6.4 percent of India’s GDP during that period. On an individual basis, this translated to an annual impact of Rs. 2,180 per person due to poor sanitation.



India leads globally in poor sanitation and open defecation, with over 60 percent of the world's open defecators residing in the country. This starkly illustrates the enormity of the issue, particularly prevalent in rural areas. According to the 2011 census, 53.1% of Indian households lacked toilet facilities, with rural regions bearing the brunt at 69.3%, compared to 18.6% in urban areas. Even where toilets exist, their utilization remains notably low for various reasons.

Despite previous sanitation initiatives such as the Central Rural Sanitation Programme in 1986, the Total Sanitation Campaign in 1999, and the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan in 2012, the impact was limited. In response, on October 2, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the ambitious Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), India's most extensive cleanliness drive yet. SBM comprises two sub-missions: Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural) and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), both aiming for a Swachh Bharat by 2019, commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary.

The objectives of Swachh Bharat include eradicating open defecation through the construction of individual, cluster, and community toilets, ensuring sanitation facilities for every family, establishing solid and liquid waste disposal systems, promoting village cleanliness, and ensuring access to safe drinking water. The mission plans to construct nearly 120 million toilets in rural India by 2019, estimated at a cost of Rs. 1.96 lakh crore. SBM not only focuses on infrastructure but also seeks to instill behavioral changes at the grassroots level, encouraging toilet usage and upholding cleanliness, aligned with the sustainable development goal of achieving clean water and sanitation (Goal 6).

Sanitation plays a critical role in public health, environmental sustainability, and overall well-being. Key reasons why sanitation is important:

Disease Prevention: Proper sanitation, including access to clean water and safe disposal of human waste, is crucial in preventing the spread of diseases. Diseases like cholera, diarrhea, dysentery, and various infections are often linked to poor sanitation and inadequate availability of fresh, clean water.

Public Health: Sanitation facilities, including toilets and proper waste disposal systems, are essential for maintaining good health. They prevent contamination of water sources and the environment, reducing the risk of waterborne diseases and illnesses.

Environmental Impact: Adequate sanitation practices protect the environment by preventing water, soil, and air pollution. Improper waste disposal can contaminate water sources, harm ecosystems, and contribute to environmental degradation.

Social and Economic Impact: Good sanitation practices lead to improved productivity and economic development. Access to fresh water and sanitation amenities results in less time spent on health issues and more time available for education, work, and personal growth, especially for women and children who often bear the brunt of inadequate sanitation.

Quality of Life: Sanitation directly impacts the quality of life of individuals and communities. Access to proper sanitation facilities and clean water contributes to dignity, well-being, and a better standard of living.

Preventing Stigmatization: In many societies, lack of sanitation facilities can lead to social stigmatization. Access to proper sanitation ensures that communities don't face discrimination or social exclusion due to inadequate facilities.

Overall, sanitation is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone in public health. Having access to clean water and appropriate sanitation amenities is essential for the health, well-being, and development of individuals and societies. The below figure explains importance of sanitation.



Swachh Bharath Mission/ Abhiyaan

Swachh Bharath Mission/ Abhiyaan is a movement to bring in behavioural change at the grass root level to use Toilets and maintain cleanliness and hygiene. The primary goals of the mission include: **Elimination of Open Defecation:** A key objective is to ensure India becomes free from open defecation is by constructing toilets and promoting the use of sanitary facilities. The mission aims to improve sanitation and hygiene practices, reducing health risks associated with open defecation. **Solid Waste Management:** Another key objective is effective management of solid waste. This includes proper collection, transportation, processing, and disposal of waste to maintain cleanliness and hygiene.

Behavioral Change: The campaign seeks to bring about a shift in societal behavior towards cleanliness and sanitation. It aims to create awareness and promote a culture of cleanliness among individuals and communities.

Infrastructure Development: Swachh Bharat also focuses on the construction of household and community toilets, waste treatment plants, and better infrastructure to support cleanliness and hygiene.

Cleanliness in Public Spaces: The mission emphasizes the cleanliness of public spaces, such as streets, parks, markets, and tourist spots, to create a more aesthetically pleasing and healthy environment.

Health Impact: Improving sanitation and hygiene directly impacts public health. The campaign aims to reduce diseases caused by poor sanitation practices and open defecation.

Behavioral Change Communication: Communicating and promoting the importance of cleanliness and sanitation through various mediums, including media, community engagement, and educational programs.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Rural):

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in rural areas, is a crucial aspect of the nationwide cleanliness campaign, aimed to address sanitation issues prevalent in rural India. Its primary focus is eliminating open defecation, promoting hygiene, and building sanitation infrastructure.

Toilets and Sanitation Facilities: One of the primary objectives was to build toilets in rural households to curb open defecation. The campaign aimed to improve sanitation by increasing the construction of toilets and improving access to clean facilities in rural areas.



Behavioral Change and Awareness: The initiative also emphasized behavioral change by promoting awareness regarding the significance of maintaining hygiene and sanitation practices. This included educating communities about the health hazards of open defecation and the benefits of using toilets.

Community Participation: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan encouraged community participation, engaging local authorities, organizations, and individuals to take ownership of cleanliness drives and the construction of sanitation facilities.

Solid and Liquid Waste Management

Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) stands as a pivotal element within the program aimed at cultivating cleaner urban and rural areas. States are tasked with fostering Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) interventions for Solid and Liquid Waste Management, driving Community/Gram Panchayats to seek such a system. Additionally, states must facilitate capacity building to empower Panchayats in effectively operating and maintaining these systems.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Urban)

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in urban areas aimed to address sanitation and cleanliness issues in cities and towns across India. Its focus was on improving urban sanitation, waste management, and hygiene practices.

Waste Management: One of the primary objectives in urban areas was to improve waste management systems. This included better waste collection, segregation, and disposal practices to reduce the environmental impact of untreated waste.

Toilets and Public Facilities: The initiative also aimed to increase the availability of public toilets and improve the quality of existing facilities in urban areas. The focus was on providing access to clean and safe sanitation facilities for residents and visitors.

Cleanliness and Behavioral Change: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in urban areas emphasized the importance of cleanliness and hygiene. Awareness campaigns and behavioral change initiatives aimed to encourage individuals to take responsibility for keeping their surroundings clean.

Community Engagement: Similar to the rural focus, the initiative encouraged community participation and engagement. It involved local authorities, citizen groups, and organizations to work together towards the common goal of a cleaner urban environment.

The First phase of Swachh Bharat was declared successful with declaring open defecation free nation and Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 was to be implemented from 2020 to sustain the results achieved through First phase of Swachh Bharat.

Constraints for the implementation of the programme:

Funding Constraints: Adequate funding is crucial for implementing comprehensive waste management and sanitation programs. Limited financial resources can hinder the execution of large-scale projects.

Infrastructure Challenges: Building adequate infrastructure for waste management and sanitation requires time and resources. In some areas, the lack of proper infrastructure can impede effective waste disposal and sanitation efforts.

Behavioral Change: Changing societal behavior towards cleanliness and adopting new sanitation practices can be challenging. Cultural habits and beliefs often need to be addressed and altered to embrace new practices.

Maintenance and Sustainability: Ensuring the sustainability and maintenance of constructed infrastructure, such as toilets and waste treatment facilities, is essential. Without proper maintenance, these facilities can deteriorate, impacting their effectiveness.

Coordination and Governance: Collaborating with multiple government bodies, local authorities, and stakeholders to align efforts and coordinate actions can be complex. Efficient governance and interdepartmental coordination are essential for successful implementation.

Community Engagement: Engaging and motivating communities to actively participate in waste management and sanitation initiatives can be difficult. Generating sustained interest and participation from the public is a challenge.

Technology and Innovation: Adopting new technologies and innovations for waste management and sanitation may face resistance due to initial investment requirements or lack of awareness about their effectiveness.

Recommendations for the proper implementation of Swachh Bharat

For the effective implementation of Swachh Bharat or similar cleanliness and sanitation initiatives, several recommendations can be considered:

Community Engagement and Awareness: Create awareness campaigns tailored to different demographics, focusing on the importance of cleanliness and sanitation. Involve local communities to drive behavioral changes through education and engagement programs.

Infrastructural Development: Invest in the development of proper infrastructure, including the construction of toilets, waste treatment plants, and waste management systems, ensuring they are well-maintained and accessible.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborate with private organizations for funding, innovation, and expertise. Public-private partnerships can help address resource constraints and bring in specialized knowledge and technology.

Government Support and Policy Implementation: Government support is crucial. Clear policies, effective enforcement, and strong governance mechanisms can drive the success of the program.

Technology Adoption: Utilize technology for efficient waste management, monitoring, and public engagement. Implement innovations for waste treatment, recycling, and monitoring of cleanliness parameters.

Incentives and Recognition: Provide incentives and recognition for communities, organizations, and individuals actively participating in the cleanliness drive. This could encourage sustained involvement and enthusiasm.

Education and Training: Conduct training programs to educate and train local bodies, community leaders, and volunteers on waste management, sanitation practices, and the importance of cleanliness.

Behavioral Change Communication: Communication strategies should focus on changing behavior and promoting a cultural shift towards cleanliness. Engage with local influencers, media, and educational institutions for effective messaging.

Sustainability and Long-term Vision: Develop a long-term vision that ensures the sustainability of the initiative. Focus on making changes that have a lasting impact and create a culture of cleanliness for the future.

Implementing these recommendations in a coordinated and sustained manner can significantly contribute to the success of Swachh Bharat or any such cleanliness and sanitation program.

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