



Swachh Bharat Abhiyan- A Focus on Total Sanitation

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Abstract

It is a well-known fact that a country's progress is determined not only by its economic indicators, but also by its human development indicators. In case of India inadequate toilet use directly contributes to high rates of morbidity and mortality within India. Therefore Total Sanitation Programme is the need of the Country. This paper reviews the critical need of the Sanitization Programme in India, its implementation, achievements, hindrances and challenges faced by it. The purpose of this paper is to present the evolution history from Rural Sanitization Programme to Swachh Bharat Abhiyan; the dimensions like Urban Sanitation, Rural Sanitation, Solid waste management, Bio-Toilets, women (security and health) concerns with toilet, have been analysed and it is found that insufficient toilet infrastructure plays a critical role in limiting women's access to the toilets. Often women are eve-teased, mocked at, molested in or while open defecation face harassment, violent physical attack. Sexual assault or even rape.

The findings from the research acknowledges that "Total Sanitization" is not merely a programme or scheme providing sanitary latrines to all individuals but the programme concerning health of females (easy and secure access to toilets), Social inclusions and upliftment, ecofriendly techniques (bio toilets) etc., thus focusing on human development of a country which will further add to the overall development of India.

Keywords-*Sanitized, Mass Awareness, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Sanitary Latrines, Health and Security of Women, Waste Management, Budget.*

Introduction

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) is a National campaign by the Government of India, covering 4041 statutory towns, to clean the streets, roads and infrastructure of the country. This campaign was officially launched on 2nd Oct, 2014 at Rajghat, New Delhi, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself cleaned the road. About 3 million government employees and school-college students of India participated in it. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has generated wide interest among the media, policy makers and common citizens.

Components of The Programme Are-

- Construction of individual sanitary latrines for household below the poverty line with subsidy (80%) where demand exists.
- Eradicate manual scavenging.
- Introduce modern and scientific municipal solid waste management practices.
- Conversion of dry latrines into low cost sanitary latrines.
- Construction of exclusive village sanitary complexes for women providing facilities for hand pumping, bathing, sanitation and washing on a selective basis.
- Total sanitation of villages through the construction of drains, soakage pits, solid and liquid waste disposals.
- Change people's attitudes to sanitation and create awareness.

History (Background)

With effect from 1st April, 1999, the Government of India restructured the Comprehensive Rural Sanitation Programme and launched the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC).

To give a fillip to the TSC, effective June 2003 the Government launched an incentive scheme in the form of an award for total sanitation coverage, maintenance of a clean environment and open defecation – free panchayat - villages, blocks and districts called Nirmal Gram Puraskar.

Effective 1st April 2012, the Total Sanitation Campaign was renamed to Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA).

On 2nd Oct, 2014 the campaign was relaunched as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Objectives

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan aims to accomplish the vision of a 'Clean India' by 2nd Oct, 2019 the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatama Gandhi it is expected to cost over Rs 62000 Crore (U.S. \$ 9.7 billion). Fund sharing between the Central Government and the State Government and urban local bodies is 75%: 25% (90%: 10% for North eastern and specialcategory states). The campaign also aims at 100% collection and scientific processing/disposal/reuse/recycling of municipal solid waste.

Under (SBA) six crore toilet-access in the country will be built as per the General Budget of Government of India (2015-16).

“This (cleanliness) subject was very close to the heart of the Father of the Nation. The Government has allocated Rs 9000 crore for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan”(ArunJaitley Union Finance Minister, presented the General budget for 2016-17).

The need to prioritise sanitation in the country's policy agenda has been underscored by the senior most leaders across political spectrum, emphasizing 'cleanliness is next to God', 'toilets first, temples later'. Though drinking water and sanitation are recognized as state subjects under the Constitution of India, Union Government programmes on sanitation have played a significant role in increasing the coverage of household toilets.

Of the 2.6 billion peoples who lack toilet facilities, nearly 650 million live in India. In order to address this major problem of sanitation, the Government of India has launched a nation wide “Total Sanitation Programme”.

Rural Sanitation

The first major Union Government programme on Sanitation, Central Rural Sanitation Programme(CRSP), was launched in 1986 with a view to accelerate sanitation coverage in rural

areas. The CRSP was restructured into “Total Sanitation Campaign” in 1999, which marked a paradigm shift to a ‘community led’ and ‘people centered’ approach. The programme was revamped as Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan in 2012 and aimed to accelerate sanitation coverage in rural areas to achieve the vision of Nirmal Bharat by 2022. The launch of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on 2nd Oct, 2014 marks the beginning of the largest programme on sanitation by the Government in the country till date.

Some UNICEF reports indicate that rural population is the poorest quintile of the population which has the least access to sanitation. Likewise, significant variations persist in the access of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households to toilets. Data from Census 2011 reveals that while 35 percent of the total rural population has access to water within the premises, the SC and ST households in rural areas account for 28 percent and 14 percent respectively. It is estimated that nearly 67 percent of women headed households in rural areas do not have toilets within the premises.

A manifestation of the inequity in rural sanitation programmes is the difference in the coverage of household toilets for different social groups. As per Census 2011, rural household access to toilets is still as slow as 30 percent.

Urban Sanitation

Poor sanitation has been linked to number of economic and social issues. More people in India have access to mobile phone than to a toilet and improved sanitation as reported in a UN-IWHE study.

A country with 74 percent population being literate is still grappling with the problem of sanitation and lack of cleanliness even after 67 years of independence which shows unhealthy population. Sanitation is therefore, one of the major development challenges in India. A fourth of the urban population in India lack access to safe sanitation facilities and only 30 to 40 percent are served by sewerage and waste water treatment systems. The level of urbanization increased from 27.8 percent in 2001 to 31.2 percent in 2011 (Census, 2011).

To get a comprehensive picture on the urban sanitation scenario in the country, there needs to be a close assessment of the schemes at the central government get a dealing with the sanitation. These are as follows:-

- National Urban Sanitation Policy, 2008.
- Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM): (A) Basic Services To The Urban Poor (BSUP), (B) Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), And (C) Integrated Housing Slum Development Programme (IHSDP);
- Integrated Low Cost Sanitation (ILCS) Programme.

The overall goal of the national urban sanitation policy is to transform urban India into community-driven, totally sanitized, healthy and liveable cities and towns. And for this very purpose adequate availability and 100 percent up keep and management of public sanitation facilities in all areas must be practiced. Proper functioning network – based sewerage systems must be ensured. The concept of ‘Smart City’ have been evolved in the country with the collaboration of various foreign countries. This would enhance the urban outlook and create the clean and smart urban India.

Solid Waste Management

Solid waste is a major source of environmental pollution in Indian cities or towns. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has estimated that by 2047, waste generation in Indian cities will increase five-fold to touch 260 million tonne per year, implying that the current solid waste generation is over 50 million tonne per year. Disposal practices at the solid waste open dumping sites are highly unsatisfactory. The poor management of solid waste has led to contamination of ground water and surface water through leachate and pollution of air through unregulated burning of waste. Unscientific practices in processing and disposal compound the environmental hazards posed by the solid waste. The combined effect of the inefficiencies in collection, and inadequate and unsafe disposal is evident in widespread insanitation, contaminated water and high incidence of chronic respiratory and communicable diseases found in Indian cities.

It is important to note that unsafe disposal of the human excreta imposes significant threat to public health and environmental cost particularly to urban areas. It is also observed that inadequate discharge of untreated domestic/municipal waste water has resulted in contamination of 75 percent of all surface water across India.

- Building a toilet in each home is of course, a laudable exercise but there is more to the issue than meets the eye. The standard septic tank and the soak pit may appear to offer easy and low cost solutions but they are fraught with the danger of fecal matter leaking into the soil as they are not appropriately designed and constructed the seepage goes on round the year and it is not easy to check or monitor it as it is not overtly visible for the locals to take action, thus lulling them into a false sense of safety which is detrimental to public health, so the need is for environment friendly techniques to be incorporated in making latrines.

Bio- Toilet

As septic tanks are not safe, so against this backdrop that the bio-toilet enters the scene with a positive impact. In contrast to the septic tank or soak pit, it deploys what is known as the bio-digester tank as it helps digest the fecal matter using a modern biological principle. While the septic tank merely waits for the waste matter to turn into sludge and manure slowly over a period of months during which, the seepage goes on unnoticed and uncontrolled, the bio-toilet actively takes charge of dealing with the waste matter efficiently. It does it with the help of anaerobic bacteria which, as the name indicates grow and multiply in the total absence of atmospheric oxygen as it prevails inside the sealed tanks.

In other words, the bio-toilet technology involves active digestion while the older method rely on passive decompositions. It is more compact as it occupies only one third of the space taken by the septic tank or soak pit.

Women (Health and Security)

The most crucial problem associated with toilet access for women is the problem of safety. Often women are harassed ranging from verbal, visual, physical, flashing, stalking, violent, physical attack or sexual assault. In the context of these issues, while 'safety' of women immerses a top concern in discourses on toilets, it often focuses on sexual safety of women, thus not accounting for the implications on the physical safety of women. From the point of view of safety open defecations is very dangerous for women. Apart from low roofs and lack of adequate lighting and other infrastructural shortcomings of the toilets contributes to women unsafety.

Familial emphasis on protecting women safety for the honor of family makes women more wary of their toilet access. Adding to this, insufficient toilet infrastructure plays a critical role in limiting women's access to the toilets. Thus, restricted women master the practice of control.

They adopt practices to avoid going to the toilet, in the process not realizing the severe health implications these practices entail. Further, in the process of using uncleaned toilets leads to health problems and increases the chances of contracting chronic constipation, severe white discharge, heavy menstrual bleeding, inflations, stomach aches, kidney stones, skin problems, urinary tract infection, jaundice, nausea, psychological stress, anxiety attacks and feelings of social shame. That apart, it creates irreparable complications during pregnancy and postnatal recovery.

Open defecation leads to severe health complications in females. Many communicable diseases are spread from open human excreta to the humans itself. To avoid such health problems one should build a toilet in each household and this will add to the betterment of the human and thus the development of country.

Conclusion

The ambitious campaign has its fair share of challenges too. An impact assessment study conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) revealed that toilets built in rural areas were lying unused, as the villagers were wary of using them.

The success of this programme and in particular, its sustainability is likely to depend upon its coherence with the social structural forces which dry poor sanitary condition.

It is also necessary to sensitize the political leadership at national, state and district levels on the principles of demands driven approaches to total sanitation and to unable high level political support for sanitation. State government may be encouraged to introduce regulation making obligatory to Panchayat Raj Institutions to ensure that all households in the gram panchayat have access to sanitation facilities.

The School children would work as crucial change agents in making this mission a success. They would not only apply the basic approaches to cleanliness in their own lives, but they would also carry the message around in the society.

Every segment of population from primary school children to elderly persons need to be properly sensitized about inherent linkages of sanitation for public health. Besides roping in the educational institutions, particularly the schools in awareness campaigns, optimum use needs to be made of social media as well as electronic and print media to spread the message to grass route level.

The World Bank's Water and Sanitation Programme's five day workshops under the Swachh Bharat Gramin Abhiyan concluded at Krishna Farm near Bijnor. Around 165 village pradhans and locals were participated. The workshop was aimed at making villages free of open defecation and as many as eight villages pledged not to get their daughters married into families which don't have toilets in their houses.

- For ensuring an effective sanitation policy, the following also need to be considered:
 1. Need for mass awareness;
 2. Social and occupational aspects of sanitation;
 3. Coordination among administrative bodies/institutions;

4. Comprehensive approach;
5. Optimum use of technology;
6. Reaching the unreached-social inclusion;
7. Bridging the demand supply gap;

A total of 31.83 lac toilets were built between April 2014 and January 2015 under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan which is 25.4% of the target for 2014-15 or the next five Years the government's plans to invest nearly Rs 2 lakh crore to construct 12 crore toilets across India but for its true success mass awareness at all levels is needed as at many areas it is seen that even after construction of individual household latrines by the government the people are wary of using them.

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