

SANITATION (SWACHH BHARAT MISSION), GOVERNANCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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Abstract

The degree of deprivation and socio-economic exclusion in the society can be measured by using six strategic components of human development, namely; health, basic education, nutrition, water supply, sanitation and housing. Sanitation in general and toilet facility (for households) in particular is essential for sustainable development in terms of safety, security, self-esteem and social status of the civilized society. Improved sanitation can maintain our health, the environment we live in and our quality of life and is also considered as a sign of being civilized (individual as well as country). Sanitation situation in India is quite unfortunate and distressing and that's why urgent policy interventions are essential. "Swachh Bharat Mission" has been introduced to address the serious issues of toilets shortage in rural as well as in urban areas. It focuses on both qualitative (usage) and quantitative (construction) improvement in sanitation in India. The biggest challenge that lies ahead is not the construction of toilets but the issue of hygiene in terms of maintenance, water supply, cleanliness. The mission tries to overcome these challenges by creating awareness among people. Besides, to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the mission, there is need of implementing a strong monitoring mechanism that will remain vigilant in achieving the mission objectives and should evaluate output (construction) and outcomes (use) of the mission from time to time.

Keywords: Sanitation, open defecation, policy, toilets, intervention and mechanism

Introduction

The development of the nation is very much dependent upon amplification of people's choices and their capabilities that add value to decent standard of living and wellbeing of the masses. That is why, **Dr. Mahbub ul Haq** rightly said that "the basic purpose of development is to

enlarge people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities". The objective of development is to create an enabling environment where people enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.

The “*basic need*” approach has acknowledged six strategic components of human development globally. These are health, basic education, nutrition, water supply, sanitation and housing. The degree of deprivation and socio-economic exclusion in the society can be measured by using all these components. Sanitation in general and toilet facility (for households) in particular is essential for sustainable development in terms of safety, security, self-esteem and social status of the civilized society. Improved sanitation can maintain our health, the environment we live in and our quality of life and is also considered as a sign of being civilized (individual as well as country).

National Sanitation Policy has been introduced to address the serious issues of toilets shortage in rural as well as in urban areas. It focuses on both qualitative (usage) and quantitative (construction) improvement in sanitation in India.

Sanitation in India - An Overview

According to Census of India-2011, in sanitation front, at all India level, 53% of total households do not have toilet facilities within their premises. Further, it is found that 69.3% rural households and 18.6% urban households do not have toilet facilities within their premises. This clearly shows the unhygienic peripheral environment caused due to open defecation by people. Although open defecation (OD) has come down from 78.1% in 2001 to 69.3% in 2011 in rural areas and, 26.3% in 2001 to 18.6% in 2011 in urban areas, still a large number of people defecate openly which is a subject of great concern and a sign of national humiliation.

Table 1- Households having Toilet Facility in India: 2001 & 2011(%)

	Have 1 toilet facility within premises (%)		Do not have toilet facility within premises (%)	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Total	36.4	46.9	63.6	53.0
Rural	21.9	30.7	78.1	69.3
Urban	73.7	81.4	26.3	18.6
Rural-Urban Diff.	51.8	50.7	-51.8	-50.7

(Source: Census 2011, GoI)

If we comprehend the census-2011 data in detail, it is found that 53% of people i.e. around 66 crore out of total population (125 crore), defecate in open every day in India. This is about 60% of the total open defecation (OD) in the world. In an average, 33 crore women and children openly defecate and are constantly being watched and molested. As a result, crime rate has increased against women over the years. This indicates degradation of social status, social values and is a kind of humiliation of on our part. Toilet facility within the premise has been increased from 36.4% (2001) to 46.9 % (2011) at all India level which is about 10% per decade i.e. on an average 1% growth in every year. If we assume the same growth rate in the future, India will take 53 more years to achieve the status of OD free country. The growth rate of toilet facility in premises in rural India is quite serious, about less than 1% per annum; that means rural India has to wait for next 70 years to become OD free. The objectives of providing 100% toilet facilities to the people by 2025 as promised by India in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will get a big blow if we attain the present growth rate (toilet construction). This clearly reflects the poor living and pitiable sanitation situation in India.

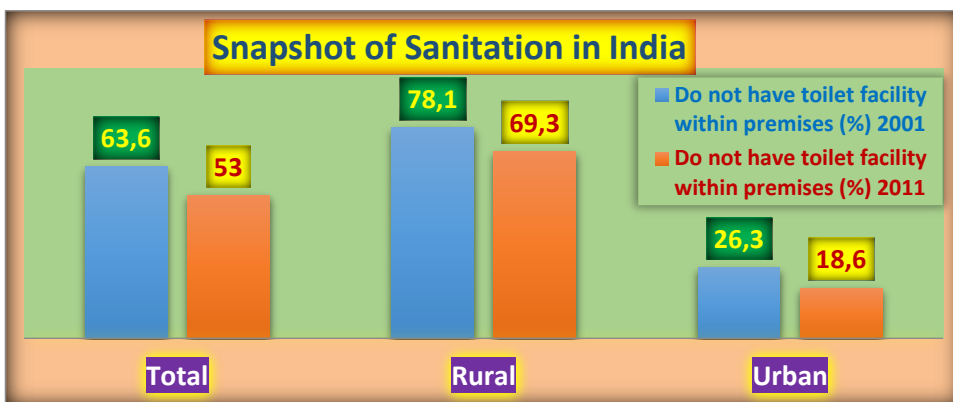


Figure 1 (Source: Census 2011, GoI)

Sanitation situation in India is quite unfortunate and distressing and that's why urgent policy interventions are essential. There is a serious call for public provisioning for toilet facilities in the rural areas in particular. This indicates a high degree of suffering among rural people and specially the women and children. In this regard, "Swachh Bharat Mission" which has replaced the earlier 'Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan', is no doubt a welcome step. The other areas of sanitation that needs attention are related to eradication of manual scavenging, solid and liquid waste management and to convert of waste to wealth.

Swachh Bharat Mission - Milieu & Objectives

Swachh Bharat Mission was launched on 2nd October, 2014 on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti to achieve “*Clean India*” by 2019. This mission is designed to be accomplished to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of Nation. Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi has taken the initiative with active involvement and said that “Clean India” was the vision of Mahatma Gandhi and the government is trying and facilitating to achieve the same. He led the mission by sweeping the pavement of *Valmiki Sadan* and *Bapu Niwas*. He has also requested the people of our nation to be the part of the mission and to keep their surrounding clean. He is looking forward for voluntary association of citizens and people’s participation in the mission to make it a grand success. A large number of people have taken ‘*sanitation pledge*’ including our prime minister. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) had taken the initiative to administer the sanitation pledge to its employees too.

Recently the Government of India (Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation) gave a circular on 30th September, 2014 enlisting the features, broad guidelines and measures for improvement of sanitation and cleanliness in India. Looking at the diversity and vastness of our federal system, the Swachh Bharat Mission has been divided into 2 sub-missions:

1. *Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin*
2. *Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban*

Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) will get the budgetary support from Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation while Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) will get the grants from Ministry of Urban Development. The scheme for construction of toilet will be funded in ratio of 75:25 by the centre and state respectively. But special category states like Jammu & Kashmir, North-Eastern states as Manipur, Assam etc. will get the funds in 90:10 ratios from centre and state.

Also the unit cost for individual household toilet has been increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,000 in the restructured ‘Swachh Bharat Mission’ in order to provide water to toilets for hand washing and cleaning. Till date, housing provisions from Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) have been provided but without toilet. In future, such provision needs to be amended where provision of independent toilets shall be a part of the housing schemes Earlier MGNREGA also attached in improvement of sanitation facilities in Gramin area. Now in lieu of all, matters related to toilet construction and related issues needs to be taken care of by Swachh Bharat Mission only.

The government has decided to retain other components of Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan like Solid-Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) & Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs). In terms of fund allocation, Solid-Liquid Waste Management will be funded at 75:25 shared by centre and state

respectively. The issues and nature of CSCs and its functioning are different from SLWM. Just construction of Community Sanitary Complexes is not enough, its responsibility of ownership, maintenance and cleanliness is very much important for its success. The success of CSCs remains in the hand of management of Gram Panchayat and its efficiency. The cost of complex will be shared in ratio of 60:30:10 by Centre, State and Community respectively.

Also in order to ensure greater efficiency and better management, the responsibility of construction of school toilets has been transferred to the Department of School Education and Literacy. Similarly construction of toilets in Anganwadi will be managed by Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The biggest challenge that lies ahead is not the construction of toilets but the issue of hygiene in lieu of maintenance, water supply, cleanliness. The mission tries to overcome these challenges by creating awareness among people. Besides, role of technology is very important in terms of construction, cost reduction and sustainability. To ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the mission, there is need of implementing a strong monitoring mechanism that will remain vigilant in achieving the mission objectives and should evaluate output (construction) and outcomes (use) of the mission from time to time.

Policy Initiatives and Interventions

Despite the landmark improvement in sanitation in India, the nation lags behind many other nations whose GDP is far below us. Around 53% of population is openly defecating, out of which the women and children are the hardest sufferer. As health and environment is a state subject and sanitation directly affects the health and environment and hence sanitation also becomes a state subject. So the success of this scheme depends directly upon the role of state in terms of its implementation and vigilant management. Thus the scheme proposes that each state can adopt their self-determining technology but that needs to match or be above the set standards provided by centre. Few initiatives and suggestions of the mission detailed herewith:

- Although state will make their own sanitation strategy still they have to adhere to the norms and follow the mission objectives. Besides, central government will award as well as incentivize states on the basis of their performance. To trigger this process, the central government will support the states in terms of technology and fund allocation.
- During the period of 2014-19, the government has proposed to spend Rs. 2 lakh crore for the mission where Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) will get Rs.1.34 lakh crore and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) shall get Rs. 62,009 crores.

- Also change in behaviour of public is important. For instance, many people even though provided with sanitation facilities at their respective houses, they still defecate in open areas. The scheme tends to not only emphasize on construction but also the maintenance as well as spread of awareness.
- Thus civilizing people by spreading of awareness and supporting them financially, technologically and educating them are imperative for achieving 360 degree behavioural change.
- As the prime minister has addressed the nation, specially the corporate sector to achieve this mandate and advocated that corporate social responsibility by private player as a part of funding and supporting the program. Many private players have come forward and also a few corporate players and a number of educational institutions have already started implementing the plans to achieve the same.

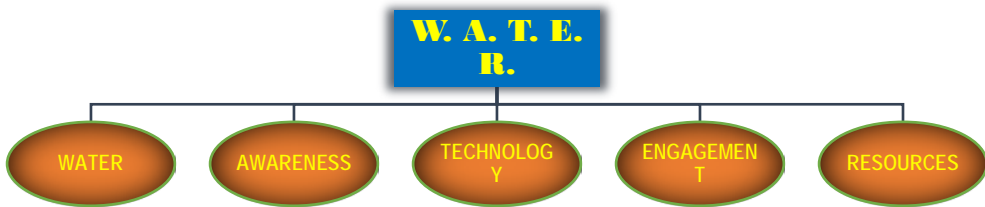
Peoples' Movement and Public Awareness

Post-independent era, India had started a lot of schemes and initiatives on sanitation for the well being of people through public provisioning, financial support and coordination among various stake holders. But with special interest and involvement of our Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi, Swachh Bharat Mission has got a momentum where public; politician, corporate house and government officials are involved. Swachh Bharat Mission becomes peoples' movement and lunched on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi who had been a supporter of sanitation in India. Prime minister has addressed the nation to support the mission to achieve complete cleanliness or samporna swachhata in India. He has emphasized on construction and maintenance of toilet and its uses. Also request the people to keep public places and their surroundings clean. He said that sanitation is not about construction of toilet rather the change behaviour and mindset of the people in view of better sanitation. He requested people to work for 100 hours in a year or 2 hours in week to contribute in the cleanliness drive as a volunteer.

Issues and Challenges

Although the mission has started with best of intentions and to spread the benefit among the needy and deprived population, still several inherent challenges poses a threat toward its efficient implementation. Though it started with a noble cause and philosophy, it can't be turned into fruitful implementation unless scientifically and efficiently managed due to numerous challenges. The acronym "**WATER**" (developed by the author) describes a set of fundamental challenges that the government may face and

accordingly needs to address the same to achieve improved sanitation and better well being of people.



W: Water

For a hygienic living, toilets are very much essential. But the real benefit of toilet facilities is very much dependent upon availability of water for flushing, cleaning and hand washing etc. Also it has been observed that about 47% of people, who have access to toilet facilities, aren't able to avail them due to unavailability/shortage of water. Thus it can be interpreted that the major obstacle ahead of implementation of mission is not the issue of availability of fund for construction but the availability of minimum amount of water in toilet.

A: Awareness

In our country, unhygienic living is a major issue that also leads to high contamination rate, mortality rate etc. Open defecation by people, is a social stigma. Open defecation is also a striking satire toward the Indian culture which emphasizes on respect for women and love for children who are still deprived of having proper sanitation facilities. Moreover open defecation increases the chances of crime against women as well as children that has been brought to our notice through newspapers recently. Another challenge that lies ahead is that people even though with facilities of toilets at their premises, don't maintain the hygiene of their toilets by properly flushing, cleaning of toilets using sanitary cleaning material as phenyl etc.

T: Technology

In order to achieve and implement the said scheme, sustainable technology at affordable cost that can be availed by states and be accessed by masses without any compromise with the set standards; needs to be provided. Technology intervention is essential for achieving faster and cheaper provisioning of toilet facility for the deprived.

E: Engagement

The success of this scheme depends on the collective effort by both state as well as private players. Thus the government has proposed for engagement of private players, corporate sectors, civic society and NGOs in addition to government organization for a collective effort to achieve improved sanitation for a better nation.

R: Resources

India is a developing nation with limited resources. The centre is short of fund as the limited funds needs to be allocated on several areas as agriculture, housing, drinking water, social welfare etc; in order to maintain consistency in nation's growth. Thus with the limited funds, an overall developments in all areas is very difficult. Also basic needs not only include sanitation, but also includes housing, drinking water, food needs etc. Hence proper resource allocation as well as their vigilant monitoring for proper utilization is important.

Concluding Remarks

A better and healthier tomorrow is not only the government's responsibility but a collective duty to be shared by all the citizens of the nation. Proper sanitation provisioning is a step towards a better hygienic environment. It's a step taken by Government of India, if not new, is definitely a step to create awareness and encourage people's participation towards achievement of goals of total sanitation for all. It's a kind of civic mission for providing service to nation, driven by patriotism and participation rather than politics. Thus success of this mission is not only the responsibility of the workers engaged in sanitation work or program but is rather the responsibility of each individual of our nation. If each and every individual and institution/organisation should try their best to keep their immediate surrounding clean, then definitely the dream of "*Clean India*" could be achieved. Swachh Bharat would therefore make a significant impact on public health, and in safeguarding income of the poor, ultimately contributing to the national economy.

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