

# Swach Bharat Abhiyan: Challenges and Prospects

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**“Mahatma Gandhi had two dearest thoughts: he said that if he wanted anything before independence, it was cleanliness in the country”.**

**Shri.Narendra Modi  
Prime minister of India**

## INTRODUCTION

Swach Bharat Abhiyan, it means that clean India mission it is a national level campaign launched by the Government of India on 2nd October 2014 to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage. It is a major step towards the protection of degrading environment. The important objects of the mission include elimination of open defecation, conversion of insanitary toilets to pour flush toilets, eradication of manual scavenging and above all to bring about a behavioral change in people regarding healthy sanitation practices. It also ensures public participation in achieving these objectives. The campaign aims to achieve its objectives on 2019 as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary. The important objective of the SBM is that to improve the level of cleanliness and to make open defecation free.

Swach Bharat mission has had the biggest domino effect in the world. Because it has addressed the centuries old practices on open defecation and it has had major health and economic impact. According to reports, 11 states are now open defecation free namely Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Gujarat, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Meghalaya. India, which had sanitation coverage of mere 41.92 per cent in 2014 has increased its coverage to 63.94 per cent, and this improvement is being viewed as a major success of the campaign. More than 3.5 crore toilets have been built under the mission in two years compared 83 lakh toilets built in 10 years between 2001 and 2011 under the Total Sanitation Campaign, as per the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Not only is it a sharp increase in the number of toilets built under any national sanitation programme, but the pace of constructing toilets under Swach Bharat has been speedier as well. Nearing three years of completion, the campaign has now also laid its focus on the other aspects of sanitation such as behavioral change, piped water supply to toilets and drainage.

However, it has been clearly declared that the campaign is not only the duty of the government but each and every

citizen of the country is equally responsible to keep the nation clean or swatch.

## History of Swach Bharat Abhiyan

The campaign of clean India movement is the biggest step taken ever as a cleanliness drive till date. The program invited the participation of people from various realms of life which made the mission as a national movement. The prime minister had nominated the name of nine famous personalities from business industries, sports and film industry in order to drive the campaign and to make it a wide level phenomenon. He also requested them to invite another nine personalities individually and requested to continue the chain and carry the mission in any corner all around the country. Peoples from different sections of the society came forward to participate in the movement. There are lots of other programs introduced by the government to make the country clean and secure. One of the important program that may introduced by the government called Central rural sanitation program (CRSP) in 1986. The aim of this program is to construct the individual latrines for the personal use of the people living below the poverty line. It also aimed to convert the dry latrines to low cost sanitary latrines. The latrines are made for the rural women. Another important program that is introduced by the government is the Total sanitation campaign (TSC) in 1999 by government of India to restructure the rural sanitation program. The main aim of this program is to make total sanitation all over the country improve its coverage, maintaining clean environment and also making the open defecation free.

## Objectives of Swach Bharat Abhiyan

The Swach Bharat Abhiyan, introduced by government of India is to accomplish the goal of making India clean and secure and also to fulfill the dreams of our father of nation Mahatma Gandhi by 2<sup>nd</sup> October of 2019. It has been expected that the program may have an investment of 62,000 crore of Indian rupee. The government has taken the initiative of this program beyond the politics and with extreme patriotic feelings. The program have lot of objectives that must be fulfilled by the country by 2019 which may include;

- To eliminate the system of open defecation in India.
- To translate the unhealthy and insanitary toilets into pour flush toilets.
- To eradicate the system of manual scavenging.

- To make people aware of healthy sanitation practices by bringing behavioral changes in people.
- To link people with the program of sanitation and public health in order to generate public awareness.
- To build up the local bodies strong in order to design, execute and operate all systems related to sanitation and hygiene.
- To enormously start the systematic processing, disposals of reuse and recycling the sanitary waste and Municipal Solid Waste.
- To facilitate required atmosphere for the private sectors to cooperate in the Capital Expenditure for all the operations and protection costs related to the “swachatha” campaign for clean India.

### Vision and Targets of SBM

The vision and targets of this mass people movement includes,

- Access to sanitation which includes toilets whether at school, public places or at house. Sanitation infrastructure like sewage treatment plants is to be established.
- Safe and clean drinking water availability should be ensured.
- Convert insanitary toilets into clean flush toilets
- Making the sanitation system more powerful in both the rural and urban areas.
- Waste management with complete disposal and reuse of liquid and solid wastes.
- Motivating and spreading the awareness of cleanliness among the people.
- Motivate communities and Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to adopt sustainable sanitation practices and facilities through awareness creation and health education.
- Create user friendly environment by encouraging cost effective and appropriate technologies for ecologically safe and sustainable sanitation.
- To seek proactive engagement with the corporate sector leveraging corporate social responsibility (CSR) opportunities created by Companies Act of 2013 and funding assistance from multilateral resources.
- Behavioral changes in society at large and at individual level as this mission reside on a premise that cleanliness is not responsibility of "safai karamcharis" but responsibility of 1.25 billion Indians also.
- Equity by making everybody supports the idea of Clean India and everybody gets basic sanitation facilities.
- Ancillary objectives like social inclusion by removing menaces of manual scavenging and untouchability.
- Developing community managed sanitation systems focusing on scientific, solid and liquid waste management systems for overall cleanliness.

### Key components of SBM

The aim to achieve clean India through the Swach Bharath mission is become a reality only when we have to focuses on the components which will help to make the prospects of the programme more beneficial. The SBM have three major components which will be helpful to fulfill the major objectives of the mission. The major components of the SBM are as follows;

- Construction and Usage of Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs)
- Solid and Liquid Waste Management
- Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs)

### Construction and Usage of Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs)

Construction and Usage of Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs) is one of the primary components of SBM. A duly completed household sanitary latrine shall comprise of a Toilet Unit including a substructure which is sanitary (that safely confines human faces and eliminates the need of human handling before it is fully decomposed), a super structure, with water facility and hand wash unit for cleaning and hand washing. It is an inbuilt principle that the toilet has to be constructed by individual households after demand creation so that use of toilet is ensured with a sense of ownership of the beneficiary. One of the major objectives of SBM is to make the individual household latrine in every household around all the states in India. The IHHL coverage in the states shows the progress and prospects achieved by the programme and also the way forward to the aim of clean India.

The below table shows the various states in India and their individual household coverage of latrines (IHHL) during the year 2017-18

No	State name	IHHL coverage (%)
1	Andhra Pradesh	96.33
2	Arunachal Pradesh	99.16
3	Assam	85.24
4	Bihar	57.80
5	Chhattisgarh	100
6	Gujarat	99.98
7	Haryana	99.93
8	Himachal Pradesh	100
9	Jammu and Kashmir	76.27
10	Jharkhand	76.73
11	Karnataka	89.57
12	Kerala	100
13	Madhya Pradesh	91.69
14	Maharashtra	99.73
15	Odisha	54.65
16	Rajasthan	100
17	Tamil nadu	97.94
18	Uttar Pradesh	65.80
19	Uttarakhand	99.99
20	West Bengal	93.88
21	Telegana	71.58

Source: Ministry of Housing and Urban affairs, Government of India.

The above table shows the individual household latrines coverage in various states of India during the year 2017-18. The figures are expressed in percentages. There are four states in India during the year 2017-18 which have 100% individual household latrine coverage. These four states include Kerala, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The lowest IHHL coverage was experienced by Odisha with 54.65% and Bihar with 57.80% respectively. Rest of the states is very much nearer to the 100% coverage of IHHL during the year 2017-18.

### Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM)

With the objective of achieving “ODF Plus” status and to improve cleanliness, hygiene and the general quality of life in rural areas, the aspect of Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) assumes greater significance. All Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to be targeted for coverage with a

SLWM project. The objective is to initiate SLWM projects in all Gramapanchayats without delay. Communities or Gram Panchayats have to be motivated to come forward and demand for such a system, which they have to subsequently operate and maintain. Once the demand is created, to ensure that the resources are used efficiently, SLWM is to be taken up in project mode for each Gramapanchayats with financial assistance capped for a Gramapanchayats on number of household basis to enable all Gramapanchayats to implement sustainable SLWM projects.

### Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs)

Community Sanitary Complexes comprising of appropriate number of toilet seats, bathing cubicles, washing platforms, wash basins etc. are set up in a place in the village acceptable and accessible to all. Such complexes shall be constructed only when there is lack of space in the village for construction of household toilets and the Community/ GP owns up the responsibility of their operation and maintenance. They can be made at public places, markets and bus stands etc. The proposal for putting up CSCs will be approved by the State Level Scheme Sanctioning Committee (SLSSC). Maintenance of such Complexes<sup>9</sup> is essential for which Gramapanchayats should own the ultimate responsibility and their Operation and Maintenance (O&M) should be assured. User families, in case of complexes specifically meant for households, may be asked to contribute a reasonable monthly user charge for cleaning & maintenance. For complexes in places of community congregation, pay and use model may be encouraged.

### Prospects of SBM

#### Social prospects of clean India

India is conventionally hierarchical society where caste system has been prevalent. Eradication of manual scavenging and construction of water based toilets will lead to freeing of people of some lower castes from this practice which should be called a national shame. If their rehabilitation is ensured by the government, it will lead to breaking of shackles on marginalized castes in Indian society and this has been envisaged in this mission. People who collect garbage from our houses and roads still face the same situation every day. They are not provided with safety gloves or any other equipment which can safeguard them from fatal infections and bacteria. They sacrifice their time, energy and to a great extent their health too to do their job and keep our surroundings clean. Moreover, they are prone to or rather imprisoned to social stigma. People are inspired by all celebrities who picked up broom for one day or a few hours but those same people outcast the real celebrities who do this job every day. Really, we do live in a dual-faced society.

Women and children are especially vulnerable to the risk of open defecation. Their safety is compromised especially if a person is sick than a lack of toilets within the premises of the house is quite curse. A cleaner society is healthier society. "Prevention is better than cure", this quotation applies very well here. Sanitation and an overall clean environment would lead to better health outcomes. The component of the mission that ensures awareness and education is key to such social transformation.

#### Economic opportunities

Good hygiene and sanitation are the indicators of social and economic development in a society. Sanitation and health

status of a country significantly affects nation's economic development and performance. As per UNICEF report 54 per cent people defecate in open in India as against just 7 per cent each in Brazil and Bangladesh. Only 6 per cent rural children below five years in India use toilets. To a large extent this is the cause of India accounting for the largest number of fewer than five deaths- nearly 1.5 million a year. A cleaner India would lead to a healthier India which means a significant cost cutting over disease and health. This means lesser out of pocket expenditure for individuals and more fiscal space for the government.

As estimated the completion of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan would indirectly attract many business houses to clean India. This in turn will improve the GDP growth and generate variety of sources of employment. It can play a great role in reducing death rate, health expenses and lethal disease rate. It has been recognized that huge expenditure in health care cost is a big drain on the resources of many a family and is major contributor to poverty. According to WHO's report due to diseases created by lack of cleanliness every Indian loses additional 6500 rupees. And if we take out affluent households then burden on poor people go up by rupees 12000 - 15000. Cleanliness will save poor people from diseases and unemployment. Serving Mother India is Serving India. A nation with a healthy population is more capable of contributing to and achieving its development goals and making India vivid and vibrant. Clean India would draw more tourists and improve its economical condition. It is for this reason the Prime Minister has urged every Indian to devote their 100 hours every year for the cleanliness of India. This is sufficient to make this country a clean country by 2019. A filthy environment leads to loss of education of children which further harms the demographic dividend of the nation. Energy from solid urban waste is clean energy and it helps in ensuring energy security of the nation. Also, recycling of waste will mean lesser loose of polybags and other harmful material. A cleaner India would mean more attraction for tourists thus giving a boost to the economy.

#### Information Support System

The implementation of this all inclusive comprehensive mission requires various types of information support to endure the optimum and effective utilization of available resources. The development of Management Information Systems (MIS) and the regular input of program progress data on a household basis have opened up the opportunity of analyzing the data available, to provide information and suggestions that is useful to inform the program policies, and implementation and allow corrective measures. The issues related to planning, implementation and monitoring such a massive and complex program makes it necessary for a steady flow of information and data, regarding the changing status of outstanding problem and the implementation of the program so as to analyze and understand the work being done across each unit of administration over time, and enable the taking of appropriate pragmatic measures aimed at moving towards the national objectives. Thus this new vista has become base for all planning and monitoring.

#### Environmental Prospects

Waste recycling will reduce "ecological footprints" of India. Waste - energy will decrease use of fossil fuels. An in general cleaner environment will mean cleaner air, water and land. It will help India in meeting its environmental commitments globally.

### Political prospects

Domestically, cleanliness needs to become a political issue. Clean India mission has generated some awareness in people about it. Once they realize the full significance of cleaner environment, political parties will be bound to keep it as one of the main points in their agenda. Internationally, India's global image will improve and will provide a greater say to India in global scenario. Also, it will be an inspiration for global community. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has been appreciated at the UN, too as 2nd October is observed as the World Toilet Day around the world. However, all these opportunities will be realized only if the challenges in making India clean can be overcome.

### Challenges of SBM

The Swachh Bharat Mission needs better cohesiveness and well managed amalgamation with education, skill development, Make in India initiative, Digital India mission and so on. Clean India can't be achieved if the mission works in isolation. Awareness can be achieved through making cleanliness and environment a compulsory part of education system. Smart cities and Make in India reflect solar panels manufacturing and solar energy. An indicator of cleanliness needs to be prepared with the help of Digital India mission and a outline of incentives and disincentives can be prepared. Moreover, there is equivalent mounting task of coordination between three ministries who are technically managing this people's movement.

- Rural Sanitation is under the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation [MDWS].
- Urban areas are vested with the Ministry of Urban Development [MoUD].
- School Sanitation under programme like "Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan" is taken care by Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Absence or presence of harmonization and synergetic relationship among these ministries can make the benefits of mission accordingly. The Swachh Bharat Mission's progression is still asymmetrical which failed to bring successful behavioral changes in society at large and at individual level. Construction of toilets will not be enough the purpose but require changing the mindset regarding the persistent use of toilets. There is more focus on toilet and latrine, but other issues are unharmed, as infrastructure, rising urbanization and needs, mind-set of people, global image, e-waste recycling, reuse, recycle, reduce [RRR], pollution, community participation, many more issue integrated by Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Deliberate commitments on citizens can't be long term solution. Dedicated and loyal people for the mission need to be deployed. Though the mission garnered much recognition, ground realities are different. There are garbage-heaps just below the boards of Clean India.

There is a need of an inclusive idea of cleanliness, which includes air, water, solid waste, noise pollution. Even nuclear waste is a menace that must be heeded upon. 'Namami Ganga' aims to make sure effective abatement of pollution and reconstruction of the sacred river with accessibility of clean drinking water. It also contemplates establishing mess treatment plants across Ganga's itinerary. Cleanliness of rivers is linked with the mission who must be cherished. So, this mission has extent of large scale participation of various stakeholders for multidimensional implications with cross linkages with other communal actions.

Not only us but even our Prime Minister was impressed with media for their role in Clean India movement. He said, "You have turned your pen into a broom" All News Channels and Journalists did a commendable job in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Government's awareness campaign which roped in celebrities has been able to bring issues such as sanitation and cleanliness in the public discourse. However, still a lot is preferred on this front too. Regular IEC innovations, capacity building of natural leaders, motivational sessions with children, youth and women SHGs, regular interactions with community in the form of Gram Sabah's etc, will have major impact on the sanitation scenario.

The most important challenge in the SBM is the behavioral issues of the people. Varying people's attitude towards sanitation is the biggest challenge being faced by the mission. Government has spent a lot on mass media but with modest impact. Toilets are built at quick pace but are not being used either the household or community. It is essential to understand why people don't like to use toilets. Is this because of steep habit of going for open defecation or due to non-cleanliness and poor upkeep? Hence the key to achieve an ODF India lies in bringing about behavior changes propelled by mass media and innovative IEC activities and appeals which will combat a culture of open defecation by mobilizing communities for combined decision to check this tendency. There are numerous success stories revealing how community processes have worked wonders. Also, there are several incidents of children, women and people with disabilities who have acted as real brand ambassadors of the mission by persevering and inspiring their communities to bring about a positive change. Those young brides who refused to marry into home which does not have toilets; a Panchayats chief who touched people's feet to convince them to build toilets or a physically challenged person who went around his town to spread the sanitation message are real crusaders in the mission of cleanliness. Following success stories need a special mention to be replicated across nation for vision and mission to come true.

### Conclusion

Though there remain certain weaknesses and challenges that have made Clean India mission an incomplete venture the government has undertaken various measures for the construction of toilets on a immediate basis especially in rural India with special attention on schools and public places but the maintenance of toilets is still now remaining as a huge issue. To solve this problem it needs lot of man power, money and also the institutionalization of the resources. The problem of open defecation is still rampant in the country and realistically it looks tough going to achieve the target of no open defecation by 2019 with issues of behavioral changes still remains as a big challenge. Comprehensive idea of cleanliness needs to be studied in this light. An ideal education system will develop a rational and positive way of thinking among future generations, so education plays a significant role for cleanliness. "Swachhta" is important not only in our nation, but in our citizens perception too. If a child is brought up in an environment where cleaning and other practices are considered as grass root level people's work then no movement of any kind can make any desirable changes. Perception of people is the main problem and not only the behavioral change and attitude of people can serve as a solution but effective use of media is also important. So the mission needs to focus on all

these aspects. All the case studies endorse our faith that strong, innovative and intellectual ways to implement the program will always resulted with rich outcome. These all are stories of change that is obvious not just in upshot but in a transformed mindset that necessitates and celebrates the change. It is an outcome that has not resulted from a fear or force but from strong determination to be part of a transformation.

“Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” has vast prospect for India to evolve into an even greater nation. However, dealing with the issues is not going to be easy and it will require great amounts of social and political determination. The way charity begins from home, same way cleaning begins from us, not only in our home, neighborhood, roads but in our thoughts too. The SBM is just a beginning for cleanliness; we have a long way to go to achieve the dreams of our Bappuji. It requires dedication and loyalty from the people from all spheres of India.

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