

THE INSANITARY PROFILE OF INDIA'S SANITATION

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Abstract: This is quite interesting to know that how Lack of sanitation facilities leads to a less productive population which further leads to a huge economic loss. A World Bank study claims that due to lack of sanitation Indian economy is losing 6.4% of the GDP. Recently announced Swachh Bharat Abhiyan which proclaims a goal of eliminating open defecation by 2019 was a great idea but to see its successful implementation is the real challenge where nearly 60 percent of India's population practice open defecation which spreads bacterial, viral, and parasitic infections, including cholera, polio, diarrhea, and hookworm .it must be a deep introspective question that has it ever pained us that our sisters and mothers have to go outside home and defecate in open? Poor women in the rural areas wait for the night until darkness descends, before that they can't go out to defecate. What bodily and

mentally harassment they must be feeling, how many diseases they might prone to? Is this the great India we are living in where we are failing to arrange the toilets for the dignity of our mothers and sisters?

Keywords: Sanitation, Open Defecation, Hygiene, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Introduction: It's a grave matter of shame that our contemporary situation is this that we need national campaigns and programs to remind us of our basic duties. The so called world's largest democracy India is need to have a Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, asking her citizens to throw waste in dustbins and not to defecate in open .The Swachh status report 2015 says that more than half of the rural population defecates in open. As per 2011 census more than 68% of rural population was going for open defecation.

It has been analyzed that Diarrheal diseases are linked with the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children each year in developing countries due to unhygienic conditions. The main contribution for this transmission of enteric pathogens is thought to be open defecation, which can easily expose individuals in contact with human feces containing infectious germs. Open defecation also contaminates food and drinking water profile. It has been concluded that Open defecation can be reduced by ensuring that people have access to and use toilets or latrines. Here the Studies of sewerage system in urban areas suggest that precautionary measures that prevent human feces entering the environment reduce diarrheal diseases. Now what about rural sanitation which usually focus on providing stand-alone sanitation facilities, which is an harbinger of diarrheal disease, intestinal parasite infections, anemia or halt in growth of young children.

A State wise research shows that Orissa had the highest percentage of people without access to toilet i.e., 96.1, while North

Eastern States with 18.1 percent. The urban households without access to toilets are estimated as 25.5 per cent at the all India level. Here the smaller states performs better such as Assam with 2.0 per cent, North Eastern states (2.4 per cent) and Kerala (5.1 per cent) whereas the bigger states are harshly lagging behind, like Bihar (45.3 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (45.2 per cent), Tamil Nadu (32.5 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (30.8 per cent) account for the lowest per cent of rural households without any latrine facility.

Another story of failure is of pit latrines, or what are called 'pour-flush' latrines. It has been observed that under Swacch Bharat Abhiyan the latrines that have been built are just for show. The pit size of 10 feet by 10 feet, is unsuitable for practical usage .What will people do in these small latrines? The government is blindly investing huge money for people to find ways of corruption. The pits the government is providing are small because those constructing them are embezzling some of the money. Here the size matters because people reject small pits as they believe they

fill up quickly and that also have to be cleaned manually. It is fact that mechanical emptying of small pits is impractical, because this enhances the cost of maintenance as to pump small quantities of sewage, also because toilets are often built in places that are difficult to access through vacuum trucks. Another problem is of finding emptying service providers, whether public or private, they are uncommon and hard to find. These reasons make mechanical emptying services a nasty practice in rural India. And now in order to avoid emptying latrine pits, most people make septic tanks so large and deep that they do not need to be emptied in their lifetimes and the seepage of latrine pits starts polluting the underground pure water table which is meant for drinking .

India's culture is somehow also to be blamed for the Poor hygiene in public spaces .the caste-based social rules are hindering many productive practices which might be taken up for proper sanitary measure . Most Hindus remain ardently opposed of emptying their own latrine pits. It has been observed that having a

household latrine is widely seen to damage the purity of the home. Open defecation, on the contrary, is wrongly perceived to promote purity and strength, and is also associated with health and longevity. Another reason for Understanding open defecation in rural India is that open defecation is not only socially acceptable, it is seen as a wholesome activity that promotes physical health and the purity of the body as one individual will go outside home on stroll and thus get involved in some sort of physical exercise . Also the continuing existence of untouchability in rural India helps explain the unique resistance to manual pit emptying. This ritual reflects in many ways as a part of push for greater equality, people from the lowest "untouchable" castes resist themselves in touching and emptying latrine pits because this way is widely seen as degrading and reinforcing of their low cast social status.

Another dark area which has been observed but never highlighted before is that women in rural areas have to hold urine till it gets dark. Now this is really

shameful as how can they go out in the day time when there are so many people around? It is also not an easy way at night as they do have safety concerns. Indeed the burden of lack of sanitation affects both men and women, its consequences for women are far more worrisome. Just to avoid the need to urinate, women often do not drink required water and this results in high rates of urinary-tract infections, kidney infections, heatstroke. Also many women avoid eating a full meal and required food as they do not have a place to relieve themselves during the day which makes them prone to malnutrition. Coping with menstruation is also an issue of grave concern in the absence of privacy, water or sanitary products; this has disastrous consequences for women leading to a range of illnesses such as pelvic inflammatory diseases and reproductive tract infections. Having holding the urge to defecate can lead to intestinal damage and chronic constipation along with accompanied psychological stress and pain. Women are often subject to harassment and assault when they go long distances to relieve themselves before sunrise or after

sunset. This is all how sanitation can indirectly restrict the mobility of women and strangles their freedom.

Some Studies have highlighted that the western style toilets are not the suitable remedy for India's human waste crisis as there is always a scarcity of water in much of India which makes the western style toilets completely impractical. Moreover the construction cost and maintenance of operating sewage treatment plants are highly mismatching in India. Considering how a large amount of clean and far fetched water is used to carry away a small quantity of human excreta. In a developing country like India, flushes are impractical as they are luxuriously designed to waste water only as with each flush over 10 liters of clean water go down the drain. It needs great efforts to fetch clean water; we build huge dams, irrigation systems and what not to supply water to urban areas. This water is certainly not meant for flushing down to sewage systems plus all to end up polluting more water of ponds and rivers. Today many of our rivers are dying because of the domestic sewage dump load from cities. We

have turned our surface water systems into open sewage drains. The urban areas residents avail water only for a few hours a day and in rural areas sometimes residents have to walk great distances to get water. To tackle this problem, we need to believe in non-western approaches to manage human waste more specifically because of our exploding nature of population and its exigencies.

Conclusion: Without concealing the facts it can be said that even building toilets has not actually resulted in reducing the practice of open defecation. There is no concrete system of working solid liquid waste management and maintenance is applied to facilitate Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Very little efforts are made towards information, education, and communication (IEC), the headline for behavior-change activities under this Mission. But still under the program more than 1.5 crores household toilets, and lakhs of community toilets and public toilets have been constructed and nearly 2 crores more household toilets are still under construction. This way the issue of

sanitation has come into limelight and is being recognized by every stakeholder with deep interest. This national level agenda if successfully implemented can create employment opportunities, mitigate healthcare costs and prevent many waterborne diseases like Cholera, Malaria, and Dengue. India's global image is also on stake as a properly hygienic environment can be a boon for attracting more foreign direct investment and higher tourism inflow. Another chapter of sanitation emerges when we gradually start transferring our focus from just cleanliness and hygiene to the usage of "clean technology" i.e. non-polluting in nature. It will involve use of bio-degradable fuels, innovative biodegradable solid liquid waste plants and products. Any shift towards clean technology will have positive ripple effect on the entire economy. Surely, new technology can bring a whole new set of employment opportunities like in the case of Information Technology.

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