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## Assessment of sanitation and hygiene practices within the framework of the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

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### Abstract

The 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan,' launched by the Government of India in 2014, has been a monumental initiative aimed at transforming sanitation and hygiene practices across the nation. This review article provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact, challenges, and outcomes of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in improving sanitation and hygiene practices in India. Drawing upon a wide range of academic research, governmental reports, and field studies, we delve into the multifaceted aspects of this nationwide campaign. Our assessment encompasses the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions, shedding light on the successes, shortcomings, and future prospects of this transformative program.

**Keywords:** Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, sanitation, hygiene practices, India, public health, community participation, gender, environmental sustainability, policy framework

### 1. Introduction

Sanitation and hygiene are foundational pillars of public health and societal well-being. In the context of a diverse and populous nation like India, these principles hold even greater significance. The 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan,' launched in 2014, emerged as a transformative and ambitious initiative by the Government of India to address long-standing challenges in sanitation and hygiene practices across the country. This campaign, also known as the Clean India Mission, embarked on a mission to create a cleaner and healthier India by focusing on the assessment and enhancement of sanitation and hygiene practices within the framework of the program.

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was not merely a sanitation program but a societal movement that aimed to bring about a paradigm shift in the way sanitation and hygiene were perceived, practiced, and prioritized. Grounded in the belief that improved sanitation and hygiene are essential prerequisites for a dignified life, the campaign sought to create awareness, mobilize communities, and drive behavioral change to eliminate open defecation, ensure universal access to toilets, and promote sustainable waste management practices.

This comprehensive endeavor encompassed diverse aspects of sanitation and hygiene, including the construction of toilets, the promotion of handwashing with soap, the safe disposal of waste, the provision of sanitary facilities in schools, and the empowerment of women. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan recognized that the achievement of its objectives required a multi-dimensional approach that combined infrastructure development, policy formulation, community engagement, and rigorous assessment.

The assessment of sanitation and hygiene practices within the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan framework became an essential component to gauge the program's progress, identify challenges, and refine strategies. This assessment aimed not only to measure the physical infrastructure but also to delve into the behavioral and sociocultural dimensions that influence sanitation and hygiene practices. It sought to answer critical questions about the impact of the campaign on public health, gender equity, economic productivity, environmental sustainability, and community participation.

This literature review is dedicated to exploring the body of research and studies that have undertaken the assessment of sanitation and hygiene practices within the framework of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. By examining the findings, methodologies, and insights from previous investigations, this review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the successes, challenges, and evolving narratives surrounding sanitation and hygiene practices

in India in the context of this transformative initiative. The subsequent sections will delve into the key dimensions and themes that have emerged in these assessments. These dimensions include the impact on public health, the role of behavior change communication, community participation and ownership, gender perspectives, economic implications, sustainability, and the influence of government policies. The review aims to contribute to the broader understanding of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and its implications for sanitation and hygiene practices, with a view toward informed policymaking, program implementation, and future research directions.

### Objective of the study

To Assessment of sanitation and hygiene practices within the framework of the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

### Literature Review

Bhattacharya, S. (2019), assess the impact of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on rural sanitation practices and the reduction of open defecation rates in India's villages.

Patel, A., & Sharma, R. (2017), compares the effectiveness of behavior change communication strategies employed within the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan framework in promoting sanitation and hygiene practices across different regions.

Kumar, M., & Singh, N. (2018), investigates the level of community involvement and ownership in the construction and maintenance of sanitation facilities in a specific district, highlighting the role of local engagement in the program's success.

Sharma, P., & Mehta, S. (2016), focuses on assessing the impact of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on women's safety, dignity, and access to sanitation facilities in selected regions, with an emphasis on gender equity.

Verma, R., & Gupta, A. (2020), conducts a cost-benefit analysis of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, examining the economic factors associated with the program, including subsidies, healthcare costs, and economic productivity gains.

Reddy, S., & Raj, V. (2018), presents case studies from specific states, assessing the long-term sustainability of sanitation infrastructure and behavior change efforts initiated by Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Joshi, R., & Sharma, K. (2017), assesses the inclusivity of Swachh Bharat initiatives by examining their accessibility and impact on marginalized and vulnerable populations, including tribal communities and people with disabilities.

Singh, S., & Gupta, R. (2019), analyzes the role of government policies, administrative structures, and governance mechanisms in shaping and implementing Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Mishra, A., & Jain, P. (2018), examines the adoption and impact of innovative sanitation technologies promoted by Swachh Bharat, comparing their effectiveness in different regions.

Lee, J., & Patel, H. (2019), conducts a comparative analysis of Swachh Bharat with similar sanitation and hygiene campaigns in other countries, aiming to identify lessons and best practices for improving sanitation practices.

### Historical Context

#### Pre-Independence Era

India's sanitation and hygiene practices have a long history rooted in ancient traditions and cultural norms. These

practices often varied across regions and communities.

Traditional knowledge systems emphasized the importance of cleanliness and personal hygiene, as evident in ancient texts like the Manusmriti and Arthashastra.

Many Indian villages had communal toilets and bathing areas, indicating a degree of communal responsibility for sanitation.

Despite these practices, open defecation was prevalent in rural areas due to a lack of infrastructure and awareness.

#### Colonial Influence and Challenges

During the colonial period, British authorities introduced some sanitation reforms in urban areas, driven partly by concerns over public health and the spread of diseases.

However, rural areas continued to grapple with inadequate sanitation facilities and open defecation, exacerbated by population growth and poverty.

The colonial legacy left a mixed impact on sanitation practices in India, with disparities between urban and rural areas persisting.

#### Post-Independence Efforts

After gaining independence in 1947, India initiated several efforts to address sanitation and hygiene issues. These included government-led programs, policies, and investments in sanitation infrastructure.

The Central Rural Sanitation Program (CRSP), launched in 1986, marked one of the early attempts to promote rural sanitation. However, its success was limited.

#### Challenges Necessitating Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

By the early 21st century, India faced significant sanitation challenges, including:

High prevalence of open defecation, especially in rural areas.

Poor access to toilets and sanitation facilities, particularly for marginalized communities.

Widespread health issues caused by inadequate sanitation and unsafe drinking water.

Environmental pollution due to improper waste disposal.

These challenges underscored the need for a comprehensive and transformative initiative to address sanitation and hygiene practices at a national level.

#### Emergence of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was launched on October 2, 2014, with the aim of achieving a clean and open-defecation-free India by October 2, 2019, on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.

The campaign sought to address the historical challenges by promoting community participation, behavior change, and the construction of toilets and sanitation infrastructure.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was seen as a paradigm shift in India's approach to sanitation and hygiene, emphasizing not only infrastructure development but also the importance of social and behavioral change.

#### Sanitation and hygiene practices during the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

During the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' (Clean India Mission), several sanitation and hygiene practices were promoted and implemented across India to achieve the campaign's goals of cleanliness, open defecation eradication, and improved sanitation standards. Here are some key sanitation and

hygiene practices that were emphasized during the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:

### 1. Construction of Toilets

- One of the central aspects of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was the construction of individual household toilets (IHHLs) and community toilets in rural and urban areas.
- Toilets were built with a focus on hygiene, privacy, and accessibility, with separate facilities for men and women.
- The government provided financial incentives, subsidies, and technical support to encourage the construction of toilets.

### 2. Behavior Change Communication (BCC)

- Extensive behavior change communication campaigns were conducted to raise awareness about the importance of using toilets and practicing safe hygiene.
- Various media, including television, radio, print, and social media, were utilized to disseminate messages on sanitation and hygiene.

### 3. Open Defecation-Free (ODF) Campaign

- The ODF campaign aimed to eliminate open defecation by promoting toilet usage and providing access to sanitation facilities.
- It involved community mobilization, triggering activities, and engagement with local leaders to create awareness and bring about behavioral change.

### 4. Safe Disposal of Waste

- Swachh Bharat encouraged proper waste disposal practices, including the segregation of waste at source into biodegradable and non-biodegradable categories.
- Emphasis was placed on waste recycling and composting to reduce environmental pollution.

### 5. Handwashing with Soap

- Promoting handwashing with soap, especially before meals and after using the toilet, was a critical component of the hygiene message.
- Handwashing stations and soap were made available in public places and schools.

### 6. School Sanitation and Hygiene (SSH)

- The campaign targeted schools to improve sanitation and hygiene facilities for students.
- School children were educated about the importance of sanitation and hygiene, and school toilets were constructed or renovated.

### 7. Community Involvement

- Swachh Bharat encouraged community participation and ownership in the construction, maintenance, and sustainability of sanitation infrastructure.
- Village-level Swachhata Committees were formed to oversee the cleanliness efforts.

### 8. Incentives and Recognition

- The campaign introduced rewards, awards, and recognition for individuals, communities, and organizations that made significant contributions to promoting sanitation and hygiene.

### 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were put in place to track the progress of Swachh Bharat initiatives at the national, state, and local levels.

### 10. Public and Private Sector Participation

- The government engaged with both public and private sectors to leverage resources and expertise in promoting sanitation and hygiene practices.

### 11. Special Focus on Rural and Urban Areas

- Swachh Bharat recognized the unique challenges faced by rural and urban areas and tailored its approaches to address the specific needs of each.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this review article provides a comprehensive assessment of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan's impact on sanitation and hygiene practices in India. While acknowledging its achievements, we also recognize the complexities and challenges that persist. Swachh Bharat serves as a valuable case study for other countries and global sanitation initiatives seeking to improve public health and environmental sustainability.

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