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The Clean India Mission-A Step for Better Level of Livings: An Evaluation

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The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched in 2014 with the aim of ensuring a 'clean India' by 2nd October 2019 as a fitting tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th Birth Anniversary. This mission is indeed successful in acknowledging the unhygienic conditions in India. Instead of ignoring the sanitation issue, working towards the clean India is undoubtedly quite appreciable. Not only that the target and the achievement level claimed by the government seems unbelievable. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBA), the sanitation coverage, especially in rural India has gone up from 42% to over 63%. Though, the SBA is not a toilet construction programme but a behaviour changing mass movement. By 2019-21, the problem of open defecation not only reduced to a great extent but also most of the states declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF). Moreover, under this programme, community toilets will be built in residential areas where it is difficult to construct individual household toilets. Public toilets will also be constructed in designated locations such as tourist places, markets, bus stations, railway stations, etc. But the question arises because of data disparities between the claimed and actual data regarding the numbers of bathroom and latrine construction and usage among the households at all India level, especially in rural areas. Here we are to examine the heterogeneity among the data revealed by the government and the various survey data and try to find out the possible logistic reasons behind this.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Open Defecation Free, Clean India

JEL Classification H5, I31

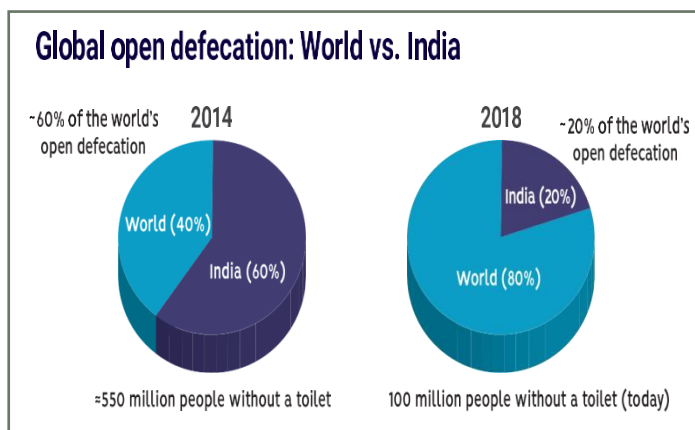
1. Introduction

The importance of clean water and sanitation in human life needs no emphasis. Clean water and Sanitation protect people from disease and enables them to be economically more productive. Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impacts food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities for poor families across the world.

Since 1947, The Central Rural Sanitation Programme, the Total Sanitation Campaign and the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyaan were the three rural sanitation management initiatives that accompanied the Swachh Bharat Mission. A follow-up to the Indian government's First Five Year Plan, the first systematic

sanitation program was initially introduced in 1954. According to the Census 1981 report only 2% of the country was covered by sanitation in 1982. The Central Rural Sanitation Program (CRSP), which was introduced in 1986, came after this. These were only focused on building toilets and provide sanitary facilities in rural regions. But without proper campaign about the usage of toilets there was no impact on the daily life behaviour and this supply-based strategy had no impact on the larger social environment. The CRSP basically aimed to improve the quality of life for rural residents, especially placed a strong emphasis on providing privacy and dignity to the rural women. CRSP was then reorganised and launched as the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in 1999. While TSC was a demand-driven, community-led, project-based programme structured around the district as the unit, CRSP was a supply-driven, infrastructure-oriented programme based on subsidies. In 2001 just 22% of rural residents had access to toilets and in 2011 it had further risen to 32.7% (NSSO Report data, 2018). To speed the sanitation coverage in rural regions using a saturation approach and by improving incentives, TSC was redesigned and named as Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA) in 2012. Simultaneously, The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS), which oversees the rural drinking water and sanitation programme, carried out a baseline survey (BLS) during the period of 2012–13 to determine how many rural households lacked access to sanitation facilities (the data from the baseline survey are current as of March 2013) (SBM-G, Report, 2019-20). According to the Census 2011 data, India has 68.84% of its population living in villages and the data showed only 32.70% of rural families had access to toilets (NSSO-2012). The report has estimated that 40.6% of rural households have sanitation facilities (MDWS Annual Report 2012-13)

Figure 1: Open Defecation Rate: World vs India



Source: SBM- Grameen Report, 2019-20, Ministry of Drinking water and Sanitation

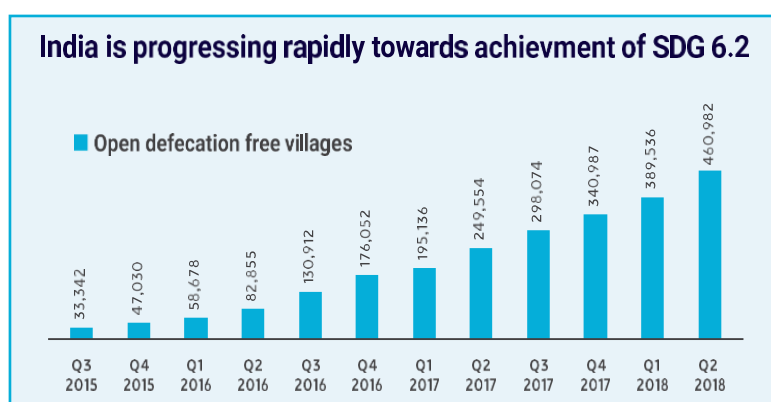
A small, random studies of 80 rural Madhya Pradesh villages revealed that the TSC program did slightly increase the proportion of families with latrines and had very little effect on the level of open defecation. Nearly 3.5 million of India's 138.2 million rural households-built toilets. However, there was no improvement in children's health. The unrealistic strategy hindered the earlier "Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan" rural sanitation program. The failure of the programs was also attributed to a lack of political leadership, strong political will, and a people-focused approach to behaviour change. As a

result, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was established on September 24, 2014, with Cabinet approval, replacing Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (Planning commission report 2013).

In developing nations like India, open defecation is a major issue. Open Defecation (OD) which refers to the practice of defecating or disposing of human faeces in fields, forests, bushes, bodies of water, or other open spaces. The United Nations listed it as one of the top concerns facing the planet. The child mortality rate has risen dramatically in India because of the open defecation system, and the prevalence of infections and other diseases is at a record high. Especially in rural area, it has estimated that almost 60% the population of India practiced OD in 2016, According to WHO reported data, in terms of numbers, India is said to have contributed the most to the global decline in OD during the period of 2015 to 2020. However, OD rates in India continue to be high. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a globally recognized benchmark adopted in 2015. Now to achieve the SDG objective, specifically Goal 6.2 in 2030 which aims for the Open Defecation Free (ODF) nation, India will need to play a significant role and continuity in practice for ODF (WHO and UNICEF, 2021).

For a developing country like India, the Open Defecation is not only a health risk, but it also poses a threat to women who live in remote parts of the nation. The baseline survey statistics revealed some improvement in the coverage of households having sanitary facilities though it also showed that the problem of open defecation was not equally distributed across the country Though Fig. 1 has clearly shown that overtime the India's OD rate has significantly declined from 60% in 2014 to 20% in 2018 with respect to the World OD burden. But still India has the highest open defecation rates in the world, a problem that comes with severe public health consequences including high levels of child malnutrition and a threshold towards the path of ODF nation.

Figure 2: No. of ODF Village in India During 2015-18



Source: SBM- Grameen Report,2019-20, Ministry of Drinking water and Sanitation

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBM), an initiative by our Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an attempt towards a cleaner India. It was launched on Oct 2nd, 2014, to celebrate the 145th birth

anniversary of our Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, and his ideologies about cleanliness. The SBM focuses on sanitation in both rural and urban areas, Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) for rural and Swachh Bharat Mission for Urban. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs oversees implementing the Mission's urban component, while the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation is responsible for its rural component. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan Sub-Group of Chief Ministers under NITI Aayog had noted that the main distinction between SBM and earlier programmes was in the efforts to get more partners to support public sector investment in sanitation (NITI Aayog report 2020-21). Though, the SBM was launched as a multi-pronged approach to enhance the level of sanitation in the country, the focus under this mission has not just been on construction of toilets but also on effecting a behavioural change in the communities and making India an ODF nation.

Objective

Based on these reported data of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS), NITI Aayog, National Family Health Survey (NFHS) and National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) during the period of 2014/15 to 2018/19 we are tried to analyse

- a) The consistency of the data provided by the various departments of the government.
- b) If there is some heterogeneity among the data, then what are the possible reasons behind that.

Discussion

The SBM is a centrally sponsored scheme of the Government of India (GOI) aimed at accelerating the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and emphasises on the safe sanitation in both rural and urban population. SBM provides funds for safe sanitation with special focus on eradication of open defecation, adoption of safe technology, scientific solid-liquid waste management and behavioural change.

Table 1: The funds allocated and funds released for SBM during 2015-19

Years	(in Crore)		
	Funds Allocated	Funds Released	Fund Utilization (%)
2014-15	2850.0	2730.3	95.8
2015-16	6525.0	6363.0	97.51
2016-17	10513.0	10272.0	97.70
2017-18	16948.27	16610.9	98.0
2018-19	14478.1	12932.96	89.3

Source: Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

Under SBM project, an incentive of Rs.12,000 is given to qualified beneficiaries in rural regions for the construction of Individual Household Latrines (IHHL), which also includes the provision of water storage. Here for IHHLs the central share is 60% and the State share is 40%. For Northeastern States, namely Jammu and Kashmir and Special Category States, the central share is 90% and the State share is 10%. Here, the additional contributions from other sources are also permitted. A total of Rs.

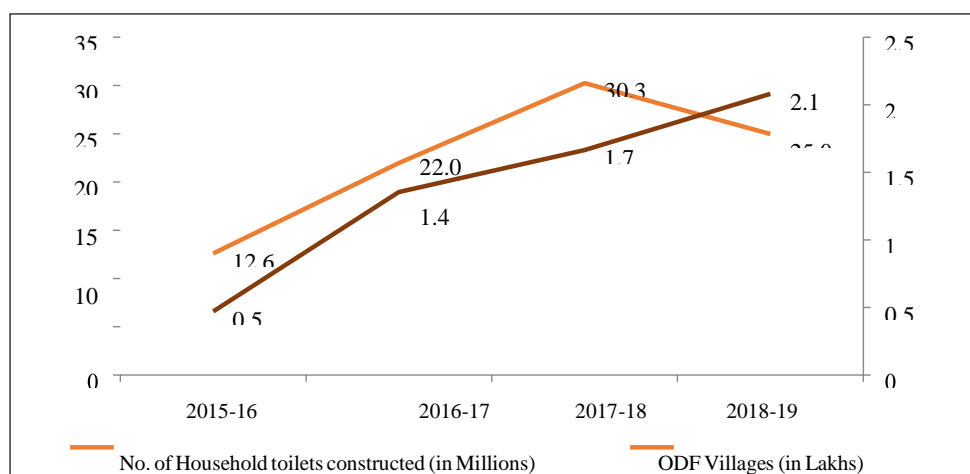
51,314.3 crore has been allocated since 2014-15 for SBM, out of which, Rs. 48,909.2 crore has been released (95.3%). Additionally, a provision was made for Extra Budgetary Resources of Rs.15,000 crore of which Rs.8,698.20 crore has already been drawn. Table 1 has shown the funds allocated for SBM and the funds released to the States/UTs since 2014-15 (MDWS annual report 2019-20).

The first phase of the Swachh Bharat Mission was from 2014 to 2019. The main goals of this phase were to end open defecation, raise awareness of cleanliness and hygiene, etc in rural area. To maintain the open defecation-free status and strengthen the waste management system, the second phase will be undertaken from 2020 to 2025. About 1096.10 lakh domestic toilets in rural areas and 62.64 lakh toilets in urban areas have been built till now. About 6 lakh villages, 711 districts, and 4371 cities have proclaimed themselves to be open defecation free.

In the urban area this mission has covered 1.04 crore households, provide 2.5 lakh community toilets, 2.6 lakh public toilets, and a solid waste management facility in each town. Under the programme, community toilets have built in residential areas where it is difficult to construct individual household toilets. However, the public toilets have also be constructed in designated locations such as tourist places, markets, bus stations, railway stations, etc.

As a result of this efforts of the Indian Government, till now, 98.9% of the areas has covered under SBM. Since October 2014, over 9.5 crore toilets have been built at all India level (till 14.06.2019). The total number of household exclusive toilets constructed during 2014 to 2018 shows a rapid progress. Starting with the number less than 50 lakh household toilets per year India is now reaching up to over 3 crore toilets per year. A major focus of SBM has been on making villages Open Defecation Free (ODF). Figure 3 has shown that since 2015 the number of ODF villages have significantly increased and up to the data on May'2019, 5,61,014 villages that means almost 93%, 2,48,847 numbers of gram panchayats (almost 96%), 6,091 blocks and 618 districts (almost 88%) have been declared as ODF (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, annual report 2019-20).

Figure 3: Number of household toilets constructed and ODF villages (2015-19)



Source: Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

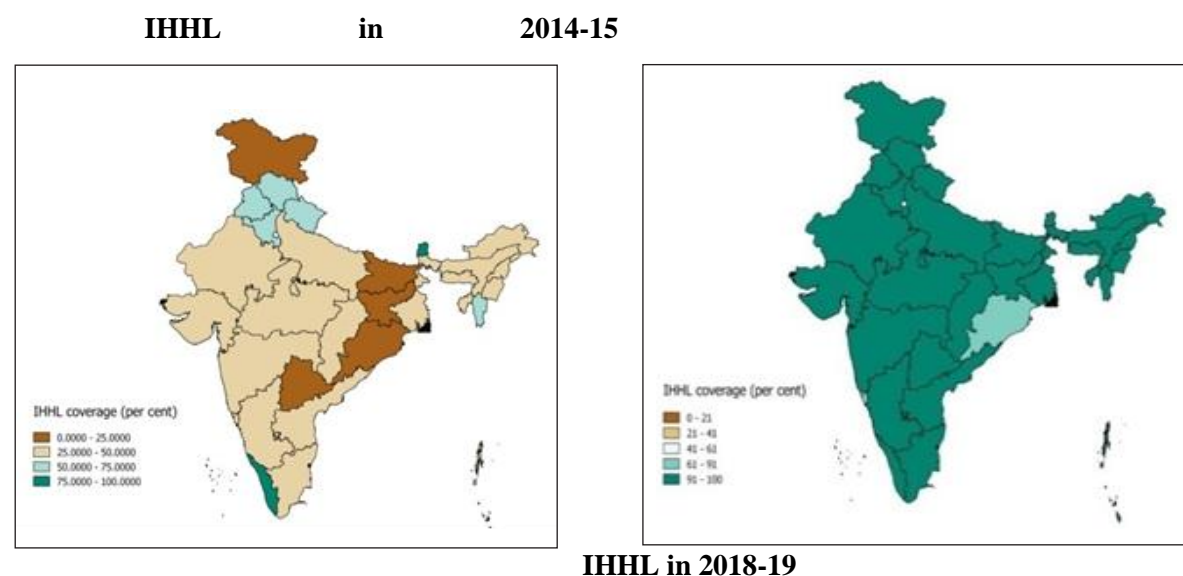
Table 2 revealed that according to the Ministry of Drinking water and sanitation annual report 2019-20, over time the percentage of households using toilet facilities has increased. Especially in rural area it has raised from 49.55% in 2015-16 to 63.17% in 2016-17 and then reached 100% in 2019-20. Similarly, in urban area this percentage has also rising from 55% in 2015-16 to 80% in 2017-18 and reached 100% in 2019-20 though the rate of implementation is significantly higher in rural area than the urban, Figure 4 has decomposed this with respect to the states for two different periods. In comparison to 2014–15, most of the states exhibited significantly improved access to IHHL in 2018–19 (Figure 4). Other than very few, most of the states will have 100% IHHL coverage. Simultaneously, the numbers of ODF district are also significantly increasing overtime. Between three financial years, the percentage of ODF districts has raised by 85% at all India level.

Table 2: Target Achieved under SDG in Rural-Urban India During 2015/16 to 2019/20

SDG Target 6.2.1	Proportion of households having access to toilet facility (in percentage)	Year	Rural	Urban
		2015-16	49.55	55
		2016-17	63.17	68
		2017-18	81.93	80
		2018-19	99.99	90
		2019-20	100	100
SDG Target 6.2.2	Percentage of Districts achieving Open Defecation Free target (Rural & Urban)	2016-17	15.2	
		2017-18	60.61	
		2018-19	100	

Source: Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Government of India, Annual Report

Figure 4: Percentage of Individual Household Latrine in 2014-15 and 2018-19



Source: Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

But a National Sample Survey report released by the National Statistical Office during the period of 2018-19 'Drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and housing conditions in India' – has found that 28.7% of village households had no access to a toilet. Table 3 clearly shows the sanitation facilities used by the households in India and its constituent states (Taking 22 major states) during the period of 2018-19 in rural-urban areas. The NSSO report has specified the sanitation in terms of bathroom and latrine. They have classified the households with respect to using the bathroom and latrine exclusively by households, commonly by households, publicly used and not used. The data clearly has shown that at all India level only 56.5% households using bathroom and 70.7% households using latrine in rural area whereas in urban area the percentage is significantly higher 91.1% and 95.9% in bathroom and latrine cases respectively.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Households by Type of Bathroom and Latrine in the house in Rural-Urban Indian States in 2018-19

Year	Bathroom				Latrine			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
States	Using *	Not using	Using *	Not using	Using*	Not using	Using*	Not using
Andhra Pradesh	82.5	17.4	96.3	3.8	77	22.9	96.7	3.3
Arunachal Pradesh	83.2	16.8	97.2	2.9	97	3	99.1	0.9
Assam	63.8	36.2	87.4	12.5	97.2	2.8	98.9	1
Bihar	40.8	59.2	85.5	14.5	63.4	36.6	94.9	5.1
Chhattisgarh	36.1	63.9	80.4	19.5	90.7	9.3	97	3
Gujarat	70.3	29.7	89.5	10.5	75.2	24.8	95.8	4.1
Haryana	96.2	3.8	98.5	1.5	95.6	4.3	99.6	0.4
Himachal Pradesh	95.2	4.7	95.7	4.3	96.2	3.8	97.5	2.5
Jammu & Kashmir	85.7	14.2	96.9	3.1	83.7	16.4	97.5	2.6
Jharkhand	18.8	81.2	77.1	22.9	58.2	41.9	91.3	8.6
Karnataka	81.3	18.8	97.5	2.4	69.2	30.7	95.4	4.6
Kerala	97.4	2.6	99.2	0.7	98.9	1.2	99.9	0.2
Madhya Pradesh	51.2	48.7	90.5	9.6	70.6	29.5	94.2	5.7
Maharashtra	79.9	20.1	91.2	8.8	77.6	22.3	98.5	1.5
Orissa	20.9	79.1	71.3	28.7	49	51	79.8	20.3
Punjab	96.3	3.7	99.3	0.7	93.3	6.7	99.7	0.4
Rajasthan	65.2	34.8	93.8	6.1	65.5	34.5	94.8	5.2
Sikkim	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
Tamil Nadu	71.5	28.5	95.3	4.6	62.5	37.5	93.8	6.2
Tripura	15	85	53.8	46.2	97.5	2.4	99.3	0.8
Uttar Pradesh	33.4	66.6	84.5	15.5	51.7	48.3	93.2	6.8
West Bengal	34.6	65.4	79.4	20.6	81.6	18.5	95.4	4.7
All India	56.5	43.6	91.1	9	70.7	29.2	95.9	4.2

Source: NSSO Round data, Govt. Of India (MOSPI). Note: Using includes Bathroom and Latrine exclusive use of HHDs and common use of the HHDs in a building

On the contrary of the data on ODF released by MDWS, the NSSO report has shown that at all India level 43.6% households not using bathroom and 29.2% households not using latrine in rural area and in case of urban areas these percentages are 9% and 4.2% in case of not using bathroom and latrine facilities. Surprisingly, the states namely Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Orisha and West Bengal which are declared as ODF by MSWD have a significant number of households not using bathroom and latrine during the period of 2018-19. In urban area this percentage of not using households have noted in Jharkhand, Tripura, Orisha and West Bengal.

Not only that, based on one of the most extensive surveys conducted by the Rehabilitation Research Initiative (RRI India) and South Asian Labour Network (SASLN) has studied in 27 states, between 2017 and 2021. Their report has revealed that “The SBM-Urban and -Gramin websites have been showcasing over 30% manufactured data, with over 12 lakh toilets ‘constructed’ between 2014 and 2020 that do not exist, and beneficiaries who have no knowledge of the toilets apparently built in their houses. With thousands of false physical verifications in rural areas, beneficiaries’ photographs have been found to be misrepresenting individual household toilets that only exist on paper. Many are in front of the previously built neighbour’s toilet with the same SBM wall paintings” (RRI, India). Their survey report on several districts’ ODF status has depicted that over 20 million people in rural areas still defecating in the open though the bathroom and latrine have built up. The states namely Bihar, Odisha and Tripura are the worst performers in the actual ODF estimates, despite the declarations on their government websites.

According to the Niti Ayog report 2023, at all India level 30.13 % of households are still not having the access to the proper sanitation.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of population deprived of sanitation facility in Rural-Urban Indian States

States	Sanitation		
	NFHS (2015-16)	NFHS (2019-21)	Changes
Andhra Pradesh	46.38	22.84	-23.54
Arunachal Pradesh	38.55	17.13	-21.42
Assam	51.19	31.58	-19.61
Bihar	73.49	50.78	-22.71
Chhattisgarh	65.37	23.16	-42.21
Gujarat	37.09	26.05	-11.04
Haryana	19.19	15.11	-4.08
Himachal Pradesh	27.63	18.27	-9.36
Jammu & Kashmir	46.23	24.3	-21.93
Jharkhand	75.32	43.36	-31.96
Karnataka	42.67	25.65	-17.02

Kerala	1.83	1.27	-0.56
Madhya Pradesh	65.15	35.51	-29.64
Maharashtra	47.94	28.33	-19.61
Orissa	70.32	39.85	-30.47
Punjab	17.28	13.69	-3.59
Rajasthan	53.9	29.3	-24.6
Sikkim	10.36	12.71	2.35
Tamil Nadu	47.55	27.95	-19.6
Tripura	36.36	26.56	-9.8
Uttar Pradesh	63.65	31.61	-32.04
West Bengal	47.81	31.9	-15.91
All India	51.88	30.13	-21.75

In states level, the percentage of depriving peoples have declined from 2015/16 to 2019/21 period of time but still 50.78% population in Bihar, 43.36% in Jharkhand, 39.85% in Orisha, 35.51% in Madhya Pradesh are still not having the sanitation facility in 2021. Basically, other than Kerala all the states have a significant percentage of population who are not having a sanitation facility.

Moreover, in the annual report of The National Statistics Office (NSO) the data said that in Gujarat 75.8%, in Maharashtra 78% and in Rajasthan 65.8% of rural households had access to any type of toilet -- whether personal, communal and paid -- though all three states had been declared ODF by the government. Madhya Pradesh had been declared ODF with only 71% of households having access, while in rural Tamil Nadu access was 62.8% (NSO Annual Report 2018-19).

Similarly, survey done by the IZA Institute of Labor Economics first phase in 2014 and second phase in 2018 found that the number of people who has access to any type of toilets (exclusive, common, or public), still defecated in the open is constant between 2014 and 2018 at almost 23%. Their study has also found that at least 43% of rural people in the states namely Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have continued to defecate in the open (IZA discussed paper, January 2019).

Probable Reasons

The most important question that is arise, why so many people are still not using the toilets which exist in their house or in the locality. Various survey report has depicted some of the possible reasons. IZA Institute of Labor Economics said that “this is the non-maintenance of built toilets in combination with usage of substandard materials for construction. Toilets therefore become the sole responsibility of sanitation workers. False claims by the government like “5.5 lakh sanitation workers have been linked to social welfare schemes” further worsens their conditions. With poor implementation in rural areas, over three lakh sanitation workers and waste workers are facing risks – and not benefits – from toilets built under this Mission, since they live on the peripheries of dumping sites”. The biggest challenge is pipes opening in drains near drinking water sources, which contaminate them with faeces” (IZA discussed paper, January 2019)

NSO report said, “one of the issues faced was toilets that were constructed but had no running water, rendering them unusable” (NSO Annual Report 2018-19).

Also, Changes in open defecation in rural north India: 2014 – 2018”, a working paper published by the research and policy advocacy Research Institute for Compassionate Economics (RICE) and New Delhi-based policy think tank Accountability Initiative (AI), is based on surveys of over 9,812 people and 156 government officials in 2018 has reported “The Swachh Bharat campaign was largely focused on latrine construction and it did little to address attitudes to latrine pits, rooted in notions of purity and pollution. Consequently, while toilet coverage increased, open defecation among toilet owners did not decline”.

Conclusion

Overall, we can say that SBM has significantly improved the society and provided benefits that can be measured at all India level and its constituent states. It is one of the biggest global campaigns to promote cleanliness. Though the Government reports overestimate the SBM’s progress in eliminating OD but it’s true that many States (both the rural-urban areas) now have deliberately try to be ODF and IHHL coverage, which has drastically changed how people, especially women are treated in the society. This purpose serves as a catalyst for eradicating gender inequality by building gender-specific latrines in public spaces including parks, schools, cinemas and roadways. This mission has also provided a source of employment to many people, contributed a significant amount to the GDP and reduced the health cost to an extent. But still there is lack of sanitation planning, adequate financial support, lack of public participation as well as poor maintenance led to poor toilet conditions and awareness programme which are major barriers to bathroom and latrine use and eliminating OD. Moreover, the poor community involvement in SBM implementation, misunderstanding the governmental rules and lack of knowledge about the risks associated with OD were additional barriers associated with higher rates of OD in India, especially in rural area.

Therefore, it is suggested that in addition to providing clean, accessible, and affordable sanitation facilities, sanitation programming should also focus on involving communities in implementation to rebuild the trust on the authority and encourage the peoples for the latrine use in their daily life. However, in addition to improving the infrastructure, providing the basic education, the community-based service and communication are also necessary to proper implementation of ODF in for the sustainable solution of the problem.

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