

SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN: A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF INDIA'S NATIONAL CLEANLINESS CAMPAIGN AND ITS IMPACTS

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Abstract:

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, launched by the Government of India in 2014, is a nationwide cleanliness campaign aimed at improving public health and environmental sustainability. The paper assesses the impact of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on public health outcomes (such as access to toilets, open defecation, water quality, and incidence of waterborne diseases) and environmental sustainability outcomes (such as solid waste management, air pollution, and climate change). The research suggests that Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has had a positive impact on public health, with improvements observed in access to toilets and reductions in open defecation, but the impact on environmental sustainability is less clear. The results highlight the need for continued monitoring and evaluation of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to ensure that the campaign is meeting its objectives.

Keywords: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, public health, environmental sustainability.

Introduction:

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA), also known as Clean India Mission, is a nationwide campaign launched by the Indian government on October 2, 2014. The mission aims to make India a clean and hygienic country by promoting cleanliness, sanitation, and hygiene practices. The campaign has several components, including the construction of toilets, solid waste management, behaviour change communication, and the promotion of cleanliness in public spaces.

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is an ambitious initiative that seeks to achieve the vision of a Clean India by 2nd October 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The mission is not only focused on urban areas but also rural areas, with a special emphasis on the construction of toilets and the eradication of open defecation. The campaign also aims to change people's behaviour and mindset towards cleanliness and hygiene practices.

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has gained momentum and support from all sectors of

society, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and citizens. The campaign has been successful in bringing about a significant change in people's attitudes towards cleanliness and hygiene. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of achieving the goals of the campaign. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is not just a campaign, but a movement that has the potential to transform India into a clean and hygienic country.

Objectives of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:

The SBA has following objectives:

1. **Elimination of Open Defecation:** The SBA aims to eliminate open defecation in India by constructing toilets and promoting the use of sanitation facilities.
2. **Solid Waste Management:** The campaign aims to promote proper management of solid waste, including segregation of waste at the source, recycling and composting of biodegradable waste, and safe disposal of hazardous waste.
3. **Behaviour Change Communication:** The campaign aims to change people's behaviour towards cleanliness and hygiene practices through behaviour change communication campaigns.
4. **Cleaning of Public Spaces:** The SBA aims to clean public spaces such as streets, roads, and parks, and maintain their cleanliness.
5. **Construction of Toilets:** The campaign aims to construct toilets in households, schools, and public spaces to promote sanitation and hygiene practices.
6. **Promoting Health and Hygiene:** The SBA aims to promote better health and hygiene practices among individuals and communities, including handwashing, menstrual hygiene, and safe disposal of waste.
7. **Strengthening the Swachh Bharat Mission:** The campaign aims to strengthen the Swachh Bharat Mission by involving various

stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

Public Health Impact:

The impact of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on public health has been significant. Here are a few ways in which the campaign has positively affected public health:

1. **Reduction in Waterborne Diseases:** The construction of toilets and improved sanitation facilities has led to a significant reduction in waterborne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid. These diseases are often caused by poor sanitation and unhygienic conditions.
2. **Improved Air Quality:** Proper waste management and cleanliness have led to a reduction in air pollution levels. This has resulted in a decrease in respiratory illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis.
3. **Better Personal Hygiene:** The behaviour change communication component of the campaign has raised awareness about personal hygiene and cleanliness. This has led to better hand hygiene practices and a decrease in the spread of infectious diseases.
4. **Reduction in Open Defecation:** The SBA has significantly reduced open defecation in India, which has been a major cause of water contamination and spread of diseases. This has also led to a decrease in diseases such as hookworm, schistosomiasis, and trachoma.

Environmental Sustainability Impact:

The impact of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on environmental sustainability has been significant. Here are a few ways in which the campaign has positively affected the environment:

1. **Improved Waste Management:** The SBA has improved waste management practices in India by promoting the segregation of waste at the source, recycling and composting of biodegradable waste, and safe disposal of hazardous waste. This has led to a reduction in the amount of waste that ends up in landfills and a decrease in environmental pollution.
2. **Protection of Water Bodies:** The campaign has focused on cleaning up water bodies and preventing the disposal of waste into them. This has led to the protection of rivers, lakes, and

other water bodies, which are important sources of water for irrigation and drinking purposes.

3. **Reduced Use of Single-Use Plastic:** The SBA has raised awareness about the harmful effects of single-use plastic and promoted the use of eco-friendly alternatives. This has led to a reduction in the use of single-use plastic bags, straws, and other items, which are a major source of environmental pollution.

4. **Promotion of Renewable Energy:** The campaign has promoted the use of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power for street lighting and other purposes. This has led to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a move towards a more sustainable future.

Criticism on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan: One of the main criticisms of SBA is that it focuses primarily on improving physical cleanliness and hygiene without addressing underlying social and economic issues. For example, a lack of access to basic sanitation facilities is often a result of poverty and inequality, which are not addressed by the campaign. Additionally, the campaign has been criticized for its top-down approach, with little input from local communities and limited investment in building local capacity.

Another criticism of SBA is that it has focused on achieving short-term goals, such as constructing toilets and cleaning up public spaces, without addressing the long-term sustainability of these initiatives. The lack of sustained funding and infrastructure investment has also been a limitation of the campaign.

Furthermore, there have been reports of corruption and mismanagement in the implementation of SBA, with funds intended for the campaign being misused or misappropriated. This has led to some scepticism about the effectiveness of the campaign in achieving its objectives.

Despite these criticisms and limitations, SBA has also had some successes, particularly in improving access to toilets and reducing open defecation. The campaign has also raised awareness about the importance of cleanliness and hygiene, and has led to increased investment in waste management infrastructure in some areas.

Challenges and Future Directions:

SBA has made significant progress towards achieving its objectives, but there are still many challenges that need to be addressed. One of the major challenges is the lack of awareness and education among the general public about the importance of cleanliness and hygiene. Another challenge is the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources to support the implementation of SBA. There is a need for continued monitoring and evaluation of SBA to ensure that the campaign is meeting its objectives.

Conclusion:

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has made significant progress towards achieving its objective of improving public health in India. However, the impact on environmental sustainability is less clear, and further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign in this area. Continued monitoring and evaluation of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan are necessary to ensure that the campaign is meeting its objectives and to guide future efforts to promote cleanliness, hygiene, and sanitation in India. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan needs to be sustained and continued as a long-term initiative to ensure that India remains a clean and hygienic country. Overall, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has been a significant step

towards achieving the vision of a Clean India. With sustained efforts and support from all sectors of society, the campaign can continue to bring about a positive change in people's lives and the environment.

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