

## **Sanitation in India**

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### **Abstract**

“Uncleanliness of the mind is more dangerous than that of the body. The latter, however, is an indication of the former. “This quote by Mahatma Gandhi shows the importance of sanitation for the mental and physical well-being of an individual. Implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission is one of the best decisions taken by the Government of India. This paper is an analysis of impact of sanitation for health. We analyze different initiatives of Government of India to achieve improved sanitation.

Keywords: Sanitation, Hygiene and Total Sanitation Campaign, Government,

### **Introduction**

Sanitation and hygiene are not dirty words. They are the keys to child survival, development and growth. Millions of children die each year due to preventable diseases. These numbers are extreme. **Recognizing the importance of sanitation, we should increase the awareness among all people and we should promote sustainable solution for improved access to sanitation.** Government of India is popularizing sanitation program through public media. The Central Government has been investing in promoting sanitation since 1986 to meet the sanitation and hygiene challenges, rather than only building facilities. There is a need to re-focus on stopping open defecation, by investing hugely on hygiene promotion and social intermediation, particularly at household level, and providing improved and affordable design options for the poor. Barriers at the community level need to be identified, analyzed and addressed for sustainable behavior change. Understanding individual and community perception are essential to change behavior. Poor sanitation and lack of hygiene practices affect health and economics of the individual, community and the nation. Poor sanitation traps the family in a cycle of ill health, poverty and deprivation.

### **Impacts of Improved Sanitation**

Sanitation and hygiene are key to child survival, development and growth. The impacts of the improved sanitation are the following.

- Lower morbidity rates in the population.
- Lower mortality rates due to diarrhoea.
- Better nutrition among children.
- Cleaner environment.
- Safer food and increased impact of improved water supplies.
- Better learning and retention among school children.
- More dignity and privacy for everybody especially women and girls.
- Increased awareness of the importance of sanitation and hygiene and the need to develop a permanent strategy.

### **Sanitation is Vital for Health**

Human feces are the primary source of diarrheal pathogens. Without sanitation facilities to safely contain and dispose of human feces, the health of everyone living nearby is put at risk. Diarrheal diseases are a main cause for less than five child mortality. It can be reduced by improved sanitation. Worm infections also badly affect children's health, nutrition and cognitive development. Children weakened by diarrhea are more susceptible to other infections, namely respiratory infections, which are another leading cause of child mortality.

Sanitation affects children's development and futures. Some of the inconvenience or problems arise an account of poor sanitation have been pinpointed below;

- Sanitation coverage in rural areas is less in comparison with urban sanitation coverage
- children aged 1-5 are mainly caused by poor sanitation, inadequate water supply and poor personal hygiene: Diarrhoea, Jaundice, Malaria, Sschistosomiasis, Hookworm, and Ascariasis
- Daily 1000 child deaths attributable to diarrhoea alone.
- Poor hygiene affects the respiratory system and aggregates the acute respiratory infections
- Poor sanitation contributes to the high malnutrition among children

### **Sanitation Is a Good Economic Investment**

Inadequate sanitation leads to financial and economic costs such as direct medical cost to treat sanitation related illness and productivity loss .Government also spend lots of money to provide health services. In addition, sanitation also leads to time and effort losses due to distant or inadequate sanitation facilities, lower product quality resulting from poor water quality, reduced income from tourism due to high risk of contamination and disease and cleanup costs. Good sanitation facilities in educational institutions encourages students especially girls students to attend the classes regularly which in turn contribute for female literacy rate.

The provision of safe water and sanitation facilities is a first step towards a physical learning environment, benefiting both learning and health of children. Sanitation provides women, primary caregivers, greater privacy and support for maintaining children's health and domestic cleanliness. Schools that have sanitation facilities attract and retain students, particularly girls. Menstruating girls are reluctant to attend schools without toilets, and their parents are reluctant to send them. Finally, healthy children attend school more and get more out of it. A lack of clean and private sanitation and washing facilities discourages children, particularly girls from attending school and these missed educational opportunities have a profound effect on human development. Sanitation affects children's development and futures, especially girls. That will lead to economic growth.

### **Urbanization versus Sanitation**

In regions where a large proportion of the population is not served with adequate water supply and sanitation, sewage flows directly into streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands, affecting coastal and marine ecosystems, fouling the environment and exposing millions of children to disease. Particularly in the context of urbanization, domestic wastewater, sewage and solid waste improperly discharged presents a variety of concerns from providing breeding grounds for communicable disease vectors to contributing to air, water and soil pollution.

The results of poor waste management also contribute to a loss of valuable biodiversity. In the case of coral reefs, urban and industrial waste and sewage dumped directly into the ocean or carried by river systems from sources upstream, increase the level of nitrogen in seawater. Increased nitrogen caused overgrowths of algae, which in turn, smother reefs by cutting off their sunlight. Improved sanitation reduces environmental burdens, increases sustainability of environmental resources and allows for a healthier, more secure future for children.

### **Initiatives by Government of India**

The Central Government has been investing in promoting sanitation since 1986.In 1999; Government of India introduced Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC). TSC was launched by the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM), Government of India (GoI) to cover all households with water and sanitation facilities and promote hygiene behavior for overall improvement of health. It focused on informing and educating public about sanitation facilities. In 2012, it was renamed as Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan and relaunched as Swachh

Bharat Abhiyan in 2004. Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP- Clean Village Award) that awards the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIS) for eliminating open defecation. Poor sanitation and lack of adequate water pose serious concerns in people's lives. Unsanitary conditions and contaminated drinking water extracts a crippling toll on human health and the environment. In addition to the indignity suffered by those lacking sanitation facilities, people suffer from diseases contracted through direct and indirect contact with pathogenic bacteria found in human excreta. Under Prime Minister Modi, Nirmal Bharat mission is restructured as Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural) and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) .Prime Minister brought SBM to center stage. Several private and public companies supported to this mission.

### **Conclusion**

Households, communities, local and national governments, civil society, and private companies all need to work together. Media and public opinion around the world can influence political leaders to popularize this sanitation. Improvements in water supply and sanitation play an important role in reducing high levels of morbidity and mortality that prevail in poor societies. While use of safe drinking water, improved hygiene and good sanitation practices have been proven to be essential for good health and availability of water a prerequisite for socio-economic development, there also exists a relationship between water, sanitation, health and development. The relationship depends on effective linkages with water, sanitation, health, hygiene and environment.

An emerging challenge is to bring about a minimum level of awareness of the importance of personal and environmental hygiene at the household, community level in rural areas and urban slums.,. A massive campaign is necessary to achieve the objective of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), so that the benefits of increased water availability, improved sanitation and good hygiene practices can be translated into improved health and a better quality of life.

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