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Need of behavioural change in sanitation practices

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Abstract

Sanitation is a basic requirement for the purpose of improving health and life span of people. In any country sanitation practices are driven by the culture of that country. The element of cleanliness is embedded in Indian culture since forever. It can easily be identified in our culture in the concept of balance of panchtatava i.e. air, water, earth, fire and sky symbolise the bond of sanitation and environment sustainability. Today on one end materialistic life style and societal divide; have paved the path for heaping up of waste on the other end underprivileged class of our country still struggle with problems like open defecation and poor sanitation awareness.

Keywords: Sanitation, environment sustainability, defecation

Introductions

According to WHO, sanitation can be termed as safe disposal of human waste and sewage and the provision of adequate services and facilities for the same. Poor sanitation lessens human wellbeing and affects socio-economic development as well in the form of lost opportunities for education and work. Sanitation is a basic requirement for the purpose of improving health and life span of people. In any country sanitation practices are driven by the culture of that country. The element of cleanliness is embedded in Indian culture since forever. It can easily be identified in our culture in the concept of balance of panchtatava i.e. air, water, earth, fire and sky symbolise the bond of sanitation and environment sustainability. Today on one end materialistic life style and societal divide; have paved the path for heaping up of waste on the other end underprivileged class of our country still struggle with problems like open defecation and poor sanitation awareness.

The United Nations Global Sustainable Development goals (SDG) encompasses a framework to attain universal and impartial & fair access to safe and affordable drinking water, equitable access to adequate sanitation and hygiene for all, end open defecation, special heed to females of the vulnerable sections of the society. Sanitation as a virtue which reflects in our approach and behaviour towards our environment and our concern about our future generations. As per 2011 census in India 49.8% of all households practice open defecation. In rural areas it is as high as 67.3% (Govt. of India 2012) [5].

For any transformation in sanitation behaviour enormous efforts are required along with adequate infrastructure development and maintenance. In our country we are witnessing a mass movement to give an address to this challenge. Proper management of waste at every level is the prerequisite of achieving the target of healthier nation. Healthy sanitation practices are associated to human dignity. Our small footsteps will leads to greener footprints for a better tomorrow.

Sanitation sector is a newly emerging sector in India with immense future potential. This sector is not limited to toilets but also includes provision of clean drinking water as well, extermination of waste and transforming them into useful resources. Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM 2014) and Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) are major initiatives of the government towards achieving a "Clean India" under Sankalp Se Siddhi By 2022.

Gandhi Ji dreamt of a nation in which no one had to face the indignity of open defecation. India has moved from the higher side of global sanitation, over Rs 1 lakh crore was committed to ensure universal access to sanitation.

"Everyday must be his own scavengerScavenging, thus intelligently taken up, will help one to a true appreciation of the equality of man."

Mahatama Gandhi Sanitation sector is a newly emerging sector in India with immense potential. This sector is not limited to toilets but also includes provision of clean drinking water extermination of waste and transforming them into useful resources.

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Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM 2014) and Jalshakti Abhiyan are major initiatives of the government towards achieving a clean India under “sankalp se siddhi” by 2027. Mahatma Gandhi dreamt of a nation in which no one had to face the indignity of open defecation. India has moved from the higher side of global open defecation to a torch bearer for global sanitation, over Rs. 1 lakh crore was committed to ensure universal access to sanitation. Construction of toilet itself does not ensure the use of these toilet at regular basis. SBA is demand driven programme, easy access to toilet is eminent concern to quality of life of a household.

Improved sanitation renders number of economic benefits which include saving in health system, costs, meager days lost at workplace and at school due to illness and time savings associated to increased convenience. (Hutton *et al* 2007)^[4].

Ghosh, A, Cairncross, S. (2014)^[3], focuses over the disparity among different states of India on the basis of household with easy access to latrine within premises. Documentation is based on census report of India year 2001 to 2011. This disparity is quite apparent in rural and urban areas as well. In this study the researchers try to find the cause of these differences & search for finding out ways, to accelerate progress in the deprived states & districts. Discrepancies in latrine coverage is found in different parts of the country. Female literacy is a prominent factor which have a strong linkage with sanitation coverage.

“Ambarlal M.A., Khan, A (2020)^[1] depicts the condition of crisis between demand & supply of basic amenities of drinking water & adequate sanitation services and infrastructure in India. Study focuses over the struggle of water & sanitation coverage, for the rural areas and & poor in urban area. This paper examines the association between sanitation conditions & effects on disease prevalence in urban areas of India. This work concludes that improvement of water & sanitation condition can reduce the rates of disease prevalence along with additional affect on human health & hygiene.

Dickis (2021)^[2] in his case study focuses on gender disparity in preference associated to toilet use highlighted by a unique slogan “No Toilet NO Bride” of being practiced in India. Study suggests that female with a poor sex ratio in any region, puts forward the demand of toilet as a condition in the marriage market and represents her as a strong bargainer.

Conclusion

There are multiple factors which include, caste, religion, gender, poverty and urban, rural locality which determine the household sanitation decision. Communicable diseases are a major component of overall disease burden in developing countries like India. The developed countries have put a check on communicable disease through universal access to safe drinking water & hygienic disposal of human excreta. Absence of effective laws, Poor infrastructure in India leads to poor sanitation. Mass level campaigns are required for behavioural change in the mindset of the people. Government is supposed to incorporate and prioritize this issue.

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