

BEYOND DISPUTE: THE SBM FACTS

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Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation

Beyond Dispute: The SBM Facts

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The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) recently launched the 150th birth year celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi, as the Mission enters its fifth and final year of implementation. The SBM has transformed into a massive jan andolan created on the ground using Information, Education, and Communication, making it a behaviour change campaign.

Sanitation programs themselves are not a new occurrence for India, with programs being run since 1981. However, in contrast to the construction or supply led programs of the past, SBM has a demand centric model. The program focuses on behaviour change to generate demand for sanitation services by the rural population which is then followed by supply.

However, some recent reports have sought to undermine the progress made by the SBM on the ground, with incorrect claims. In this regard, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation presents the following clarifications.

Progress

The SBM has shown tremendous progress these last 4 years, under the personal leadership of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi leading to massive behaviour change campaign and people's movement underway on the ground.

Since the inception of the program, the rural sanitation coverage of India has increased significantly, from 39% in October 2014 to 95% today. Nearly 8.7 crore household toilets have been constructed under the Mission. As a result, 25 States/Union Territories, 529 districts, and 5,09,067 villages have declared themselves as free from open defecation.

Earlier this year, the National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) conducted under the World Bank support project found that 93.4% of the households in rural India who have access to a toilet use it, confirming that behaviour change is happening on the ground. The survey covered 92040 households in 6136 villages across States and UTs in India.

The Swachh Bharat Mission is the world's largest public funded sanitation program. Between the Centre and State, over Rs. 1 lakh crore would have been allocated for the Mission in 2019. In addition to the budget allocation of 15,000 crore this year (FY 2018-2019), 15,000 crore has been further allocated through Extra Budgetary Resources.

Communication strategy

Behaviour Change Communication is undertaken under the SBM at the ground level and is complemented with mass media at the national level as well. For example, mass media campaigns such as Darwaza Band, starring Amitabh Bachchan, Akshay Kumar, Bhumi Pednekar and Anushka Sharma, communicates the messages of women empowerment, promotion of twin pit toilets and usage of toilets, while the SBM foot soldiers, Swachhagrahis,

participate in the triggering of communities for behaviour change and sustaining improved behaviours through Inter-Personal Communication. There are currently over 5 lakh Swachhagrahis across the country undertaking behaviour change interventions at the grassroots.

Water for ODF

A policy decision has been taken under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) to prioritize the provision of piped water supply (PWS) for villages that become ODF. Of the 5 lakh plus ODF villages, translating to 14.13 lakh habitations, 6.16 habitations have PWS through public stand posts. The remaining are being covered on priority. At a technical level, the SBM promotes the use of the rural pan, a steep slope pan, which requires no more than 1-1.5 liters of water for every use of the toilet, addressing challenges related to scarcity of water.

ODF-Quality

A strong parallel focus is being maintained on the quality of the work on the ground and sustaining progress much after the program reaches its goal in 2019. Verification of all ODF declared villages is very unique to Swachh Bharat Mission. Multiple rounds of verification are carried out for the village by the districts and States. Within 90 days of declaration, verification is done for each household in the village. Another round of sustainability verification is done 180 days after the first round.

Impact of SBM

A recent WHO study reports that Swachh Bharat would have led to saving of 300,000 lives by 2019 and around 150,000 lives would be saved annually thereafter. In a report titled 'The Financial and Economic Impact of SBM in India (2017)' UNICEF estimated that a household in an ODF village in rural India saves Rs. 50,000 every year. BMGF has released a study that shows significant improvements in diarrhoea prevalence and stunting among children in ODF villages, compared to nearby non-ODF villages.

The Swachh Bharat model of sanitation has led India into a sanitation revolution, and the country is on track for an ODF India by October 2019.

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