

1. The people's Policy

Context:

- ▶▶ As the states prepare to dedicate an open defecation free (ODF) country to Gandhi@150, it is timely for us to analyse how the Swachh Bharat campaign became the global benchmark for participatory and transformative development.

What is swachh Bharat Mission?

- ▶▶ The Prime Minister of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission on 2nd October, 2014, to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation.
- ▶▶ The aim of Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) is to achieve a clean and Open Defecation Free (ODF) India by 2nd October, 2019.

Objectives of the Swachh Bharat Mission:

- ▶▶ To bring about an improvement in the general quality of life in the rural areas, by promoting cleanliness, hygiene and eliminating open defecation.
- ▶▶ To motivate communities to adopt sustainable sanitation practices and facilities through awareness creation and Health Education. To encourage cost effective and appropriate technologies for ecologically safe and sustainable sanitation. To develop community managed sanitation systems focusing on scientific Solid & Liquid Waste Management systems for overall cleanliness in the rural areas.
- ▶▶ To create significant positive impact on gender and promote social inclusion by improving sanitation especially in marginalized communities.

Success of Swachh Bharat Mission:

- ▶▶ Team Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) has identified four key pillars of India's sanitation revolution, which can, more or less, be applied to any large-scale transformation in the world.

1. Leadership:

- ▶▶ Political leadership arguably the biggest game-changer for the SBM, was the prime minister investing his personal political capital in the mission. Inspired by his leadership and commitment, various chief ministers took up the cause, creating a domino-like effect, cascading leadership to the chief secretary and in turn to collectors, all the way down to sarpanchs at the grassroots level. Leaders at all levels are prime catalysts for large-scale transformations.

2. Public Financing:

- ▶▶ Typically, no large-scale transformation can be an unfunded mandate. Over Rs 1 lakh crore was committed to ensuring universal access to sanitation, thereby backing the political will with budgetary support.
- ▶▶ About **90 per cent of the 10 crore households which received toilets were from socially and economically weaker sections of society** and they received financial incentives to build and use toilets.

3. Partnerships:

- ▶▶ The SBM (G) partnered with implementers and influencers alike — national and international development agencies, media houses, civil society, celebrities, as well as all departments/ministries of the government of India, who pledged an additional \$6 billion for sanitation in their respective sectors.
- ▶▶ This “all hands on deck” approach, making sanitation everyone’s business, helped to mainstream it into the national consciousness.

4. People’s participation:

- ▶▶ The SBM-G trained over half a million swachhagrahis, grassroots motivators, who triggered behaviour change in every village of India. Ordinary people undertook extraordinary roles and inspired others to build and use toilets.
- ▶▶ Stories of sanitation champions emerged from every nook and corner of the country. A large-scale transformation can be truly successful if it captures the imagination of the people, and becomes a people’s movement or a jan andolan.

Other Measures:

1. Administrative Efficiency:

- ▶▶ It started with the prime minister setting a target, a sunset clause for the Mission — October 2, 2019. A sunset clause brought with it a sense of urgency and accountability. The deadline drove states to prioritise SBM-G and inspired Team SBM-G to imagine possibilities that they may not have done otherwise.

2. Building a Team:

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3. Solutions to Local Contexts:

- ▶▶ It was also important to think scalability during the design process. We attempted to devise solutions which are easy to implement, like the on-site twin-pit toilet systems for rural India, as opposed to expensive networked sanitation solutions.
- ▶▶ By providing flexibility to states and implementers by design, the mission allowed them to tailor solutions to local contexts.

4. Focus on low Hanging Fruit First:

- ▶▶ To build faith in the rest of the administrative system, it was important for the mission to demonstrate some quick wins. We targeted the low-hanging fruit first — the districts with the highest sanitation coverage — to become ODF on priority.
- ▶▶ This created a demonstration effect for others to learn from, and created belief in the system. Nothing succeeds like success.

5. Continuous Engagement:

- ▶▶ Continuous engagement with implementers made the mission agile. Team SBM-G visited each state multiple times and engaged directly with district collectors through learning workshops, informal gatherings and WhatsApp groups, promoting healthy competition among implementers which spurs local innovation.

6. Engaging with all stakeholders:

- ▶▶ The SBM-G made sanitation glamorous by engaging extensively with the media, leveraging popular culture, and associating Bollywood stars, sportspersons and other influencers to promote the message of sanitation.

Conclusion:

- ▶▶ Mahatma Gandhi dreamt of an India where no one had to suffer the indignity of open defecation. There cannot be a better tribute to him than the transformation of the country, in the last five years, from being the highest contributor to global open defecation to torch-bearer for global sanitation.
- ▶▶ The job is not over. The government recently released the forward-looking 10-year sanitation strategy to move from ODF to ODF Plus, focusing on sustaining the SBM-G gains, ensuring that no one is left behind, and ensuring access to solid and liquid waste management for all villages.