

CLEAN INDIA CAMPAIGN: A PATHWAY TO DEVELOPMENT!

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"You will make your institution ideal, if besides giving the students literary education, you have made cooks and sweepers of them."

Mahatama Gandhi

<http://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/gandhian-thoughts-about-cleanliness.html>

The above quote by Gandhi is a clear evidence of the significance of cleanliness in which he advises the teachers to make it an integral part of their education system. Since childhood is the most appropriate time to inculcate good deeds and thoughts in an individual. The motive of my research paper is to discuss the issues related to the clean India campaign and the challenges that work as hurdles in the successful implementation of this programme. The campaign 'clean India' was launched on 2nd October, 2014, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi but different political parties seem to make a fuss over it as if Gandhi's ideology is their patent only which deviate us from the right cause. As we know cleanliness cannot be associated with any particular religion, caste, and creed or with the agenda of any political party as it is a must for living a hygienic, healthy and blissful life. Moreover sick people make a society and country sick and unpleasant. So it won't an exaggeration to say that progress of our people and country is based upon their sanitation habits. But the problem worsens because of the litterbugs who never hesitate to make their surroundings unclean. My research work is a piece of secondary research.

Key Words: significance, cleanliness, education, challenges, political party, sanitation, litterbugs

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Objective:

- 1) To find out how effective this campaign is.
- 2) To study the problems arising in the implementation of this campaign
- 3) To analyse how school teachers and children can make this campaign succeed
- 4) What contribution the lawmakers can make to this programme

Research Methodology:

Our research paper is a secondary research work which is based upon the experience and daily instances we come across, along with the work of some other authors that we've taken into account to prove our viewpoints.

Introduction:

'I will not let anyone walk through my mind with his dirty feet.'

Mahatma Gandhi

<http://www.goodreads.com>

Bada Mangal celebration in Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh gives all the Lucknowites a reason to be proud as this is the occasion when people regardless of their caste, class, creed and religion, are served food and edibles. Large numbers of *bhandara* stalls are put up by the Lord Hanuman devotees with the aim of feeding maximum number of passersby but in the meantime paucity of civic sense and consciousness is experienced among the organizers since at the end of the day when these bhandaras get over, the city roads are covered with litters and left over. This celebration is a unique ritual in the City of Nawabs but the city folks' neglect to upkeep their city, cleanliness and disposal of waste presents a regular phenomenon every year. It's really hilarious that we expect from the administration and *Nagar Nigam* to deal with this problem but we ourselves are reluctant to take up this issue. Since our research paper is based upon the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan* so no other example could be more appropriate in this regard. Cleanliness and hygiene is a habit which is inculcated in each and every one since our childhood then why this severe issue becomes so trivial and negligible when we grow old. Decades back **Gandhiji** said, **"Sanitation is more important than independence"** which proved how significant cleanliness is for all of us and now it is a *yagya* which is revolutionized by our honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2nd of October 2014. According to the reports published in the prominent news papers of our country **this is India's biggest ever cleanliness drive and almost 3 million government official and school and college students from all over the country participated and took an oath to be the part of this even throughout their life.** The Prime Minister encouraged the countrymen by sweeping and cleaning roads and nominated nine famous personalities from different walks of life to be the part of this campaign that took up this responsibility and nominated nine more people, so on and so forth. In order to motivate common people to comprehend how sanitation and hygiene can help them to lead to healthy lives, popular faces were nominated and invited to be the part of this drive. **'It is expected to cost over 62000 crore (US\$9.8 billion). Fund sharing between the Central Government and the State Government and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) is 75%:25%**

(90%: 10% for North Eastern and special category states). The campaign has been described as "beyond politics" and "inspired by patriotism" (1)

Objectives of this Campaign:

The mission of this unprecedented campaign is manifold as it deals with different aspects of our society such as removal of open defecation, elimination of manual scavenging, recycling of municipal waste and conversion of insanitary toilets to pour flush toilets etc. This campaign also ensures a proper training of people to create awareness about sanitation and inviting private sector to participate in capital expenditure and maintenance costs for sanitary facilities.

Roadblocks in this Clean India Campaign:

Defecating in the Open

There is no dearth of helping hands since people regardless of their age, caste, class and religion surged to be the part of this unparalleled event however this cleaning programme seemed like a child's play initially but once people started working on this project, they encountered several difficulties and one of the biggest roadblocks is defecating in the open. Several families that live in the rural areas, slums or even in the few parts that are not very far from cities are habitual of defecating in the open so it's very important to find out the root cause of this problem. Is there scarcity of funds or awareness among the people of our country? According to a blog **Youth Ki Awaaz**, "... the root cause of such widespread open defecation in the country is the fact that India is a developing economy with a per capita monthly income of just 1499 US\$ (World Bank Development Indicators, 2013), making it difficult for people to afford a latrine. Surprisingly, open defecation has less to do with a country's economic strength than with the choices, priorities and habits of its people."(2)

Lack of Awareness:

So another problem in this campaign is interconnected with the previous one. People have different priorities and one of the most important basic needs come at the last number in their priority list. It may sound amusing but is entirely true that this basic need has inspired one of our Bollywood directors *Shoojit Sircar* to pick such subject to make his film *Piku*; from Motion to Emotion but people are ignorant towards this need of theirs. "**Haryana may be that typically Indian state — 70% of its houses have TV sets; only 40% have a toilet. How and why this newfound awareness of toilets, hygiene and a woman's right to privacy? It is the result of the "toilet campaign", which is part the Total Sanitation Campaign launched by the Ministry of Rural Development. In many villages, the walls are adorned with slogans such as "Na byahun beti us ghar mein, jismein na ho shauchalaya" or won't marry my daughter into a household which doesn't have a toilet.**" (3)

This story is ubiquitous in almost all the states of our country. If we relate this problem with the safety and security of women and girl of our rural area and slums definitely people will ponder over this severe issue. "**Women and girls don't need toilet facilities just for defecation; they also need privacy and dignity when menstruating. The need for sanitation facilities within homes and in public places, which meet women's physical and psychological demands, cannot be over-emphasised.**" (4) Very often we come across news regarding how women were

raped when out for the nature's call. Even girl students are not eager to attend their school because they don't have toilets in their schools. So how will we educate the girl children of our country if we won't fulfill their basic needs and a dignified life? After Vidya Balan, the popular actor has joined this mission; many girls are reported to have even refused to marry the boys who don't have lavatory in their houses.

Apart from this massive problem, there are several other issues also that should be focused in this regard such as planned way for collection, dumping and segregation of waste material since only sweeping across the roads won't solve the purpose. Not only various rural areas but big cities and towns are also not constructed in a planned way; that present a gigantic challenge to this cleanliness campaign. **An estimate of the urban development ministry in 2009 had put the cost for doing this at about Rs.48, 582 crore.** Sewage or wastewater disposal is a great problem that should be dealt with. Furthermore sewage disposal is an alarming concern which is polluting our river and lakes. According to a report of Times of India in 2009, **38 billion liters of sewage was generated per day from 498 tier I cities. Installed capacity to treat this giant river of wastewater is 12 billion liters or less than one-third of the requirement. This means the remaining 26 billion liters is getting dumped into our streams and rivers daily, making many of them terminally sick. (5)**

Cleanliness of Lavatory, Roads and Historical Monuments:

The villages and towns where there are toilets, they are not cleaned properly and regularly which result into health hazard. Few months back while travelling back from Chandigarh to Lucknow via Delhi I happened to meet two young beautiful foreigners at the first class waiting room. I, as a proud Indian, narrated many stories of incredible India to them as it was their first visit to India. But when I used the toilet of that waiting room, it caused me sheer embarrassment as that unclean, unhygienic four walled closet seemed to falsify my golden stories about incredible India. Mahatma Gandhi got it precisely right when he wrote in 1925, **"I learnt 35 years ago that a lavatory must be as clean as a drawing room. I learnt this in the West. I believe that many rules about cleanliness in lavatories are observed more scrupulously in the West than in the East."** Having experienced not-so-swachh toilets as well as open defecation during childhood visits to my ancestral village and the town next door, I fully appreciate why many prefer to go for open despite access to a toilet. (6)

Litterbugs are beyond any caste, creed or class for they are not hesitant at all to throw garbage all over the roads without having the least idea of the person like them who toils hard to upkeep the city roads. Even highly qualified, efficient and opulent people also seem reluctant and indifferent toward the cleanliness of our city. We don't feel offended while saying that sweeper is more religious than the litterbugs since he is more dutiful and concerned to make his city neat and clean. Chewing *pan masala* is injurious to health of the user but how uglier it becomes when it is spitted all over the city roads. We often blame the authorities for not paying attention to the cleanliness status of the city but if we ever experience that people sometimes even don't use dustbins to spit or to throw litters. Moreover people are so lawless and devoid of civic sense that carve graffiti on the walls of historical monuments. So we need to make our law stricter and must implement them sincerely so that culprits are compelled to follow them.

Conclusion:

Who makes our buses, trains or roads untidy? Are they illiterate, uneducated people who do not have any civic sense? Or these litterbugs are like some underage immature fellows who do not hesitate in littering and making the public property untidy. Sometimes it seems we have become habitual of such a mess all around us. We have excelled at living with litters, garbage piled up everywhere and with the choked drainage system. We keep waiting for Municipality or the Administration to come forward for our help. In fact we have become handicapped who keep waiting someone else to give the solution of our problems. But this attitude cannot help us in the long run.

Suggestions:

Clean India Campaign is beyond any political agenda or religion; this is a mammoth responsibility which should be taken up severely and seriously. Cleanliness is a pathway to development and a healthy, long life which should be taken into account by each and every citizen of our country then only we can contribute to the progress of our nation.

- 1) Childhood is considered as the most suitable time when the best habits can be inculcated in our toddlers. Hence schools not only from urban areas but from rural areas also should come forward to promote awareness of environmental issues. In this regard merely teaching and explaining the importance of cleanliness cannot solve the purpose but if some innovative skits or plays are staged definitely great changes can be brought in.
- 2) Those students who make extra efforts to make their surrounding hygienic must be rewarded and media can also play a great role to encourage these students.
- 3) Our government schools that are not well equipped should be paid more attention to since they can train the children from rural areas and those who are living below poverty line.
- 4) Not only teachers but some NGOs and eminent people also can help such underprivileged children to understand the value of cleanliness in their lives.
- 5) As far as our cleanliness campaign of India is concerned, we can make Singapore our ideal since this is the country that has taken the central place in the entire world for its strict laws against the litterbugs. So we too need to slap hefty fine on the litterbugs and in no case the culprits should be let go without paying it which we think might lessen this problem to a great extent.
- 6) The unplanned slums that have thrived in almost all the cities of our country should be focused more because a large percentage of population lives in these areas. So government can plan to spread awareness among such people.
- 7) *Nagar Nigam* that deals with this issue should have sufficient equipments laced with the modern and advanced technology for waste removal.
- 8) Several parts of the old cities in almost the entire country have very narrow lanes that cannot be cleaned with the clumsy equipments so some other methods can be planned for.
- 9) Use of plastic bags should be banned because they create hazards for our environment and our animals that eat them along with the food scattered all over the streets. Many places in our country have banned the use of plastic bags and have replaced them with the paper and cloth bag which in our opinion is an excellent method to provide employment to the thousands of people without doing any harm to the environment.

- 10) Social media such as twitter or face book can help us in creating awareness because it is accessed by the people from different strata of our society but if everyone realizes his duty and performs it without any compulsion, we can get some fruitful end result.
- 11) Use of bio-toilets can also help the residents of slums and rural area to have clean and hygienic surrounding. Even railway minister Suresh Prabhu stressed on the need to work to make this drive successful and in his budget speech he announced, "**17,000 more toilets will be replaced by bio-toilets.**" For which he proposed to **engage the private agencies and to set up waste-to-energy conversion plants.** (7)

The following lines from a popular poem by Robert Frost seem to be the best conclusion for our research paper:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

By Thomas Wood

(Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening)

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