# Bringing Behavioural Change - Swachh Bharat Mission

## What is the issue?

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- The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), despite its intent, is less encouraging in terms of the outcome achieved so far.
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- In this context, it is imperative to acknowledge the behavioural component in the implementation of the programme.
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## What are the complexities?

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- Under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), the two complex challenges are:
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i. changing behaviour by getting people to use toilets and stop defecating in the open
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ii. sustaining the changed behaviour over time
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- These challenges transforms SBM from an infrastructure-focused “toilet construction” programme to a more complex behaviour change social revolution.
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- Moreover, the SBM “market” is more complex, where there is no intrinsic demand for “goods” (toilets).
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- It is hampered by the deeply ingrained habit of open defecation and the cultural norm of not having a toilet near one’s residence.

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## What are the key challenges?

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- **Scale** - The task at the start of the SBM in October 2014 was changing the behaviour of 550 million people living in rural India.
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- **Speed** - The programme had to be implemented in 5 years.
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- **Stigma** - The centuries-old taboos needed to be challenged. E.g. it was considered impure to have a toilet inside or near the home
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- **Sustainability** - There was a huge task of having to make the recently changed behaviour stick, as sustaining it was more difficult than achieving it.
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- Despite these, there was little prior experience of doing all this, which made learning hard and the degree of difficulty more severe.
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- It literally took a village, peer pressure and whole-hearted community participation to make a village ODF (open defecation free).
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## What should be done?

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- Demand for a toilet had to be stimulated to wean people away from the habit of open defecation.
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- From the supply side, the programme needed to provide both toilets as well as a behaviour programme at scale for changing preferences.
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- There is a need for having systems and incentives in place for sustaining the behaviour change achieved.

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## Source: The Indian Express

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