

Evaluation of India's Public sanitation programmes

Why in news?

The government needs to identify the shortcomings in Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin if it wants to transform India from open defecation free to open defecation free-plus status by 2024-25.

Status of sanitation in India

- Until 2014, 600 million people (approximately 60% of the world's open defecators) were practicing open defecation across the country, of these 550 million were in rural India.
- As per Government of India, sanitation coverage in the country improved from 39% in 2014 to 100% in 2019.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G)**- Around 50% villages achieved ODF+ status under phase II of the mission.
- **ODF+ village**- It is one which has sustained its Open Defecation Free (ODF) status along with implementing either solid or liquid waste management system.
- **Top performing States**- In terms of % of ODF+ villages are
 - **Big States**- Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
 - **Small States**- Goa and Sikkim.
 - **Union Territories**- Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra Nagar Havelli & Daman Diu and Lakshadweep have 100% ODF+ Model villages.

What are the steps taken by India in sanitation?

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 6) aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

- **Central Rural Sanitation Programme**- It was started in 1986, India's first efforts to provide safe sanitation in rural areas focussed mainly on providing subsidies to people to construct sanitation facilities.
- **Total Sanitation Campaign**- In 1999, a restructured Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) was initiated to create supply-led sanitation by promoting local sanitary marts and a range of technological options.
- **Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan**- TSC is modified into Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan in 2012 to achieve total sanitation by promoting toilet construction, solid waste management, and hygiene education.

The target for reaching total sanitation was revised from 2012 to 2022.

- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**- It is a "Clean India Mission" launched in 2014 to make

India open defecation-free (ODF) by constructing toilets, promoting proper waste management and fostering a culture of cleanliness.

- **Swachh Bharat Mission**- It involves toilet construction, waste management practices and awareness campaigns. It has two components
 - **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U)**- It concentrates on making cities and towns clean.
 - **Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G)**- It aimed at universal sanitation coverage in rural areas, to make India ODF by October 2, 2019, as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary.

What are the initiatives taken under SBM-G?

- **Phase I**-It was launched from 2014-2019 to improve the levels of cleanliness in rural areas through Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities and making Gram Panchayats Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitised.
- **Phase II**- It will be implemented in mission mode from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with a focus on the sustainability of ODF status and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).



- **Goal of ODF status**- The primary objective is to make all rural areas in India Open Defecation Free by constructing toilets in households and ensuring the usage of these facilities.
- **Toilet Construction and Individual Household Latrine (IHHL) Scheme**- It provides financial assistance to eligible households to build toilets.
- **Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS)**- It emphasizes community participation and behavioural change by mobilizing communities to collectively take action to end open defecation.
- **Information, Education and Communication (IEC)**- The mission places a strong emphasis on IEC activities to create awareness about the importance of sanitation, hygiene practices, and the usage of toilets.
- **Awards**- They are given to districts, states, and individuals for outstanding contributions to the mission.
- **Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM)**- The mission recognizes the importance of proper waste management and efforts are made to promote the construction of compost pits, soak pits, and other waste management infrastructure in

rural areas.

- **Swachhagrahis**- They are volunteers who play a crucial role in mobilizing communities and promoting sanitation and hygiene practices at the grassroots level.
- **Gramin Swachh Survekshan**- It assesses the cleanliness and sanitation status of rural areas, encouraging healthy competition among districts.

What are the challenges in achieving total sanitation in India?

- **Unused toilets**- NSSO survey in 2012 revealed the reasons for non-use included lack of superstructure (21%), malfunctioning (22%), unhygienic conditions (20%), and personal reasons (23%).
- **Factors impact toilet use**- Education, household size and economic conditions impact the toilet use.
 - For example- Larger households have higher chances of not using toilets due to overcrowding and social norms.

Surveyed States in 2018	Toilet access	Atleast one member who did not use
Bihar	59%	38%
Gujarat	66%	50%
Telangana	76%	14%

- **Infrastructural deficit**- The absence of a superstructure or a proper shelter around the toilet facility can discourage its use.
- **Water supply**- A higher non-use of toilets in Gujarat was due to a lack of access to water in Dahod district, one of the two districts selected from the State.
- **Lack of privacy**- This may make individuals uncomfortable and hesitant to use the toilet.
- **Poor quality**- Individuals are likely to avoid facilities that are not in proper working condition due to concerns about hygiene and functionality.
- **Unhygienic conditions**- Issues such as inadequate cleaning, foul odors, or the presence of pests, can contribute to non-use, poor sanitation and cleanliness standards may lead individuals to seek alternative, perceived cleaner options.
- **Personal reasons**- IT may include cultural or habitual preferences, psychological factors, or individual choices such as convenience, comfort, or privacy.
- **Purity concept**- Cultural beliefs surrounding notions of purity may dissuade individuals from using toilets on their premises, leading to avoidance based on social and religious considerations.
- **Caste**- Social hierarchies and caste dynamics can influence toilet usage patterns, with certain groups facing stigma or discrimination related to sanitation practices.
 - A multi-State study reveals a higher percentage of non-users among upper castes compared to backward castes
- **Gender disparity**-Gender norms may impact toilet usage, particularly for women who may face challenges related to safety, accessibility, and menstrual hygiene.
- **Data challenge**- The left-out households and toilets unused for defecation must be identified under phase II as there is 10% gap between access to toilets and unused toilets.
- **Policy paralysis**- Phase II lacks criteria for multiple toilets in larger households and

does not address the provision for attached bathrooms.

- The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide tap water by 2024 shows no correlation between expenses and ODF Plus villages.
- **Behavioural change**- It remains a challenge as it depends on social networks like caste and overall improvement in living standards.

What lies ahead?

- The behavioural change in sanitation needs better coordination and synergy of programmes that address the basic needs of the rural population.
- Social engineering can be adopted through social networks to overcome regressive norms and caste hierarchy.

References

1. [The Hindu- Critical view of sanitation miracle in rural India](#)
2. [PIB- India achieves sanitation milestone](#)

