SDMC’s Order - Part II

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Why in news?

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South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) made it mandatory for all hotels and restaurants in its jurisdiction to give full access to the general public to their toilet facilities.

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Why it is not a proper solution?

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- The SDMC direction is a **typical example of a quick fix,** without looking at the full system, including the availability of toilets, water for flushing, the sewerage network, sewage treatment and provisions for discharge of the treated sewage into waterbodies.
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- Instead of outlining a programme incorporating these elements, the **problem is trivialised** by shifting attention away from the inaction of the government by asking restaurants to open their toilets to the public.
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- Since many restaurants are normally open only during meal times, this, in any case, **is not a solution round the clock**.
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What could be done?

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- The solution lies in **building more public toilets** and ensuring they are properly maintained and financially sustainable.

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- Most public toilets are single-storey buildings; they could easily have another floor of toilets, thereby doubling the capacity without any need for additional land.
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- **Select Citywalk Mall in Saket,** is a good example. It has several toilets for the public on all its floors, which are used by visitors and staff from different stores in the mall.
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- The maintenance contract is given to an outside agency and the toilets are kept clean.
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- There is no user charge and the costs are recovered from the rents that shops pay to the mall authorities.
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- So, it should be possible to do something similar in the markets of different Delhi localities.
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- Another possible approach for the SDMC would be to use **public-private partnership,** not only to build toilets, but provide and/or fix the different links in the supply chain of managing and disposing waste.
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- **Sewage treatment plants** can also be built on land leased by the government and capital invested by the private sector.
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Source: The Indian Express

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