



SANITATION IN INDIA: A REVIEW ARTICLE

Community Medicine

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ABSTRACT

The Nineteenth century marked a great advance in public health. In India, the maintenance of hygiene or 'shauch' as part of the 'Niyam' in the Hindu scriptures. Community- led total sanitation (CLTS) is the most popular approach used to end open defecation. It involves social mobilization, self-enforcement, and behavioral change.

KEYWORDS

Sanitation, Open defecation free

INTRODUCTION:

Historical Relevance-

Sanitation is not a new concept in India but it was as old from Indus Valley Civilization in Asia, which shows early evidence of public water supply and sanitation. In city of Lothal in Gujrat, India all houses had their own private toilet, which was connected to a covered sewer network constructed of brickwork that emptied either into the surrounding water bodies or alternatively into cesspits, the latter of which were regularly emptied and cleaned.^{1,2}

The demonstration of the World's first urban sanitation systems in the major cities of Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro of Indus Valley Civilization. The drainage systems of that period proved to be the most developed and most used systems of sewage and drainage. They were more advanced than all other sanitation systems and the recently discovered Rakhigarhi of Indus Valley civilization.³ Chanakya refers to an individual as 'chandal' or the evil one until he bathes after a massage, after visiting a cremation ground, or after intercourse.⁴

"The great sanitary awakening" by Winslow in 1923 the identification of filth as both a cause of disease and a vehicle of transmission and the ensuing embrace of cleanliness was a central component of nineteenth-century social reforms. Sanitation also changed the way society thought about public responsibility for citizen's health. Protecting health became a social responsibility.⁵ With sanitation, public health became a societal goal and protecting health became a public activity. With increasing urbanization of the population in the 19th century, filthy environmental conditions became common in working areas and the spread of disease became rampant. ⁶The UN recognizes the human right to water and sanitation, and ascertains that clean drinking water and sanitation is essential to the safety and wellbeing of individuals.⁷

One of the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDG-6) aims to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all."⁸ SDG Global target 6.2 focuses on that by 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation. According to the **World Health Organization (W.H.O)** Sanitation is a multidimensional concept alluding primarily to provision of services for safe disposal of human excreta while also referring to the provision of clean potable water as well as maintenance of hygiene through judicious means of wastewater and solid waste disposal.⁹

If we give a look at **2011 Census of India**, about 70% of rural Indian households do not have a toilet or latrine and **National Sample Survey (NSS)** found that only 09, 22 and 31% of Household's with Latrine facility, according to census of 1991, 2001 and 2011 respectively.

Recently released, India fact sheet of National Family Health Survey **NFHS-5 data** shows that Population living in households that use an improved sanitation facility increased from 48.5% in NFHS-4 to 70.2% in NFHS-5 data.¹⁰

Challenges With Sanitation At Various Levels: ¹¹

a) Social Challenge:

Breaking the caste barrier, People of higher caste averse to sharing

space with lower caste and bringing at par with themselves. Social challenge mitigated only by having a much-empowered Self Help Groups (SHG's) which can break the caste and cultural barriers. **b) Economic challenge:** i) High risk of mismanagement of funds. ii) The toilets would require regular supply of water. iii) Up keep and maintenance of sanitation is necessary to prevent outbreak of diseases. The local problems regarding water can be resolved by using recycled water or water from local streams. Regular audit and monitoring ensure healthy functioning of the Organisations. **c) Political challenge:** Need support from the state government and the local administration via DM/ Panchayat. i) Concessional land allotment for biogas plant. ii) Construction of toilets via Panchayat aid in monetary terms.

How Sanitation Related With Health

Many of the diseases directly or indirectly related with sanitary conditions. The list of diseases as Cholera, Hepatitis, Dengue, Malaria, Scabies, Ascariasis, Typhoid, Shigellosis and JE etc. reduced with proper access to sanitation and hygiene. Globally, an estimated 2.3 billion people lack access to a basic improved and unshared sanitation facility, with 892 million people estimated to practice open defecation.¹²

Poor Child Faeces Management (CFM) presents a particular health risk because young children often have the highest incidence of enteric infections.¹³ Weak developed immune systems, so their faeces likely contain higher quantities of transmissible pathogens.¹⁴

Sanitation has direct relation with health it may be physical or mental health, people using improved sanitation or access of improved sanitation helpful to their health. Past research found due to unavailability of sanitation facility women and adolescent girls' faces psychological stress.¹⁵ Due to unavailability of sanitation facilities children faces many health issues like diarrhea and caused of infant mortality rate.¹⁶ Sanitation is one of the most intimate issues that affect women, especially in slums of developing countries. Few research which indicates the gender issues and access of sanitation facility.¹⁷ there is positive impact on attendance of girl child in school if school have proper toilet and sanitation facility.¹⁸

Healthy children learn more than children suffering from worm infections cause hearing problems and lack of concentration develops in children. Parasitic worms infect 2/3rd of all school children in some African countries. Schools without private and separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls have a higher incidence of diarrheal disease and lower attendance and higher dropout rates, especially after girls attain puberty sometimes they excludes them from the education system.¹⁹

Higher rate of latrine coverage resulted in an increase in child height in northern India. However, one does not normally expect open defecation to have anything to do with height.²⁰

Open Defecation:

According to W.H.O an estimated 2.4 billion people still lack access to improved sanitation and 946 million still practice open defecation.²¹

Fifteen percent of the total population in India defecates in the open in India, according to WASH report 2021. Those who live without the use of toilets at home, according to WHO / UNICEF JMP for water supply and sanitation are vulnerable to many health risks.²²

The National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey, 2019-2020 showed that 0.8 per cent of the population in rural areas had no toilets and practiced open defecation; the figure was 6.8 per cent in 2018-2019; and 23 per cent in 2017-2018, many countries still not been declared 'open defecation free.'²³

Programme Related to Sanitation

The Declaration of the Alma Ata in 1978 emphasised the importance of primary health care and included "an adequate supply of safe water and basic sanitation" as one of its eight key elements.²⁴

In First Five year Plan Government of India include - 'The National Water Supply and Sanitation Program' and in 1986 - The Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP), the first Indian government sanitation programme, provided a subsidy of around US \$50 to build toilets for below-poverty-line (BPL) households and was mainly **supply-driven** in nature.

The poor progress under the CRSP led to a revamp. The Total Sanitation Campaign was launched in 1999 and aimed to eradicate open defecation by 2010. It was meant to be **demand-driven** and **people-centred** in nature. Thus, 4.86 million toilets were constructed between 2 October 2014 & October 2017 and then jumped to 9.12 million by 30 December 2018. The speed of construction was nothing short of breakneck. On 2 October 2019 Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, India was declared ODF more on this later.²⁵ This revised approach on sanitation emphasized information, education and communication (IEC) and capacity development activities to increase awareness among people.

CONCLUSION:

Although some effect must come after SBA in India from 2014-2019 but the complete awakening regarding Sanitation is still lacking. The main motivations for sanitation adoption and use include the desire for privacy and to avoid embarrassment or status and behaviour change is must. For girls, the provision of school sanitation facilities means that they are less likely to miss school by staying at home during menstruation. Everybody should contribute in Sanitation because we want Community driven approach because as a great saying "Sanitation is much more important than Independence".

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