

Marching towards a Cleaner India: The Stakeholder Connect

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Abstract

Cleanliness in everyday life has been an integral part of Indian culture since time immemorial. An impetus towards increasing social awareness regarding a cleaner country has been the foundation of the “Clean India Campaign”, launched in the year 2014. Integrated and sustained efforts by multiple stakeholders can be the only way forward in achieving the continued goals of a cleaner India in the long term. Hence, a continual analysis of the stakeholder participation needs to be done regularly and the drawbacks and the achievements need to be delineated and worked upon. The objective of this study is to examine the efforts made by the various stakeholders towards achieving and sustaining the goal of cleanliness, the value creation therein, and the returns that may be expected, especially for businesses contributing towards this effort. This study is based on a comprehensive literature review on the role of multiple stakeholders, especially businesses, in the pursuit of achieving the holistic cleanliness agenda set by the “Clean India Campaign”. The conclusions of this study indicate the positive aspects of the cleanliness campaign participation by the government, citizens as well as businesses (with the various elements of their value chain), resulting in increased value and ensuring sustainability in the long term.

Key Words: Clean India, Stakeholders, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA), Value Creation

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Introduction

The past two decades have witnessed exponential growth in the Indian economy, catapulting the country into becoming one of the largest economies in the world. To sustain the growth, the well-being of the country's citizens, especially in terms of improved health outcomes and the necessity of a cleaner physical environment, have gained paramount importance. The global outlook on sustainability also complements this outlook. Also, India aims to attain the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) put forth by the United Nations by the year 2030 and the sanitation-related initiatives are fundamental to achieving the SDGs.¹ The Swachh Bharat Mission, launched by the Indian Government in 2014 is a strategic step towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while involving all stakeholders and ensuring their active participation and compliance in the long term.

Good sanitation measures lead to the emotional well-being of the individuals and the society since such initiatives promote the development of good living and working environment conditions, this leads primarily to the physical well-being of the society as well. Hence, the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council have ratified the right to safe sanitation. The long-term results of the sanitation-based efforts may be seen eventually in the form of harnessing the rich demographic dividends in the future and hence underscores the need to address the issue from a strategic perspective.¹

Significance of the Study

Cleanliness in everyday life has been an integral part of Indian culture since immemorial. An impetus towards increasing social awareness regarding a cleaner country has been the foundation of the "Clean India Campaign" launched in 2014. Integrated and sustained efforts by multiple stakeholders can be the only way forward in achieving a cleaner India's long-term goal. Hence, a continual analysis of stakeholder participation needs to be done regularly, and the drawbacks and the achievements need to be delineated and worked upon.

The objective of this study is to examine the efforts made by the various stakeholders towards achieving and sustaining the goal of cleanliness, the value creation therein, and the returns that may be expected, especially for businesses contributing to this effort. The results of this study may be utilized by the policymakers to understand the perspectives and

contributions of the various stakeholders and the hurdles therein. These findings may be adequately utilized to design targeted interventions by policymakers to get the desired efforts and results from the primary stakeholders regarding future initiatives envisaged as a part of the study.

Literature Review

This study is based on a comprehensive literature review on the role of multiple stakeholders, especially businesses in the pursuit of achieving the holistic cleanliness agenda set by the “Clean India Campaign”. The major themes explored in literature as a part of the study to examine the stakeholder connection with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan included the following:

- India’s Journey Towards Sanitation -A Historical Perspective
- Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM): Rollout, Phases, Responsibilities
- The Stakeholder Connect
 - The Government Connect – Initiatives, Waste Management, Funding, Entrepreneurs
 - The Corporate Connect – Predictors, Ramifications and Contributions
 - The Citizen Connect – Awareness Creation and Attitude Change

India’s Journey Towards Sanitation -A Historical Perspective

Indian history indicates that social movements like those led by Mahatma Gandhi in the past have effectively garnered social support and social action on various causes in the country. A movement towards achieving the cleanliness goals has been the “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” launched by the government, along with a series of other sanitation-related policy measures undertaken. A well-recognized fact is the impact of inadequate sanitation measures and open defecation practices to take a toll on public health impacting productivity and also the overall environmental quality. Thousands of annually recorded premature deaths and several other million school million days lost stand testimonial to this fact. A severe dent in the nation’s economy caused by increased health-related costs and related losses may be reduced with increased sanitation measures.¹

The Indian pre-independence era was marked by the ever-increasing incidences of gastro-related infections and fevers in the public domain. The

mid-eighties and the late nineties saw the emergence of certain programs launched by the Indian government on the sanitation agenda, which included the “Central Rural Sanitation Program” and the “Total Sanitation Campaign” respectively. Though sanitation-associated coverage of greater than 50 per cent was claimed by 2011, the difference in this data from an urban versus rural perspective was quite evident. Wastage disposal and waste management have been a great problem for the country’s urban areas, especially in terms of several tons of plastic waste disposed of daily. A plethora of similar sanitation issues also engulf the rural areas, which are much more affected than the urban areas due to inadequate sanitation measures. Following the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan in the year 2012, the “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” was launched by the Indian government with the initiatives being focused on initiating and sustaining positive behavioural change towards improved sanitation measures reaping rich demographic and economic dividends in the long term for the society and the nation.¹

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM): Rollout, Phases, Responsibilities

The Clean India Mission, widely known as Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), was an initiative launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, on 2nd October 2014, to address the issues of cleanliness and sanitization in the country. Swachh Bharat Mission started to achieve universal sanitation coverage, eradicate open defecation, and improving waste management practices while spreading the awareness and importance of cleanliness in rural and urban areas. Social campaigns (like SBM) have become one of the most frequently used approaches by governments across nations to promote individuals’ motivation to behave in a more pro-environmental and pro-social manner.²

As per a report in the Indian Brand Equity Foundation, phase I of the SBM was rolled out to improve the general quality of life in rural areas by creating awareness among the communities and the Panchayati Raj institutions about cleanliness and hygiene, accelerating sanitation coverage in rural areas by eliminating open defecation, create and promote a community managed sanitation system at required places which could focus on waste management system to maintain overall hygiene by the year 2019. Government approved phase II, to be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25, focusing on the sustainability of eradicating open defecation and solid and liquid waste management. Phase II requirements included at least five pieces of information about the SBM initiative, and education and communication (IEC) messages on behavioural change to be displayed in the targeted villages.³

The SBM -Stakeholder Connect

Lederer et al. (2015) emphasizes the importance of the role played by the stakeholders in ensuring the successful implementation of any environment-related campaign.⁴ Thus, stakeholders' involvement at different levels becomes critical in successfully implementing the Clean India Mission. However, involvement in such programs requires sufficient motivation and a hurdle-free program that enhances the value for the various stakeholders. Hence, a clearer understanding and analysis of the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders becomes significant for the successful implementation of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA).⁴

The Government Connect – Initiatives, Waste Management, Funding, Entrepreneurs

Government-Based Initiatives: Bansal and Singh (2019) in their study delineated the association of various stakeholders such as citizens, celebrities, and companies, with SBA. Their study also highlighted the benefits of SBA to the country's economy by boosting the travel industry. The leading stakeholders in the Clean India Campaign are the Government of India ministries like: the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitization – which is responsible for the implementation and execution of SBA successfully in rural areas; the Ministry of Urban Development- which is responsible for the SBA implementation in urban areas. The SBM also engages local government levels like Panchayats, Districts, Municipal Corporations, NGOs, and Community Members. Some private organizations, and industries voluntarily engage themselves in achieving the goal of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) through their CSR initiatives. State Governments play an important role in the effective execution of the campaign in the respective states and coordinate with the central government and local authorities for the successful implementation of the initiatives. As per the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) guidelines (2017), the Ministry of Urban Development will be working on the following components of the SBA i.e. providing household toilets - which includes the conversion of insanitary toilets into pour-flush toilets, sanitation infrastructure like construction of community toilets and public toilets and urinals, solid waste management, behaviour change and public awareness creation, capacity building and finance.⁵

Achieving these objectives is not possible without a proper sanitation strategy. The State Governments must align their efforts with the national campaign, and they implement the program effectively within their

regions. They must allocate and approve the resources, coordinate with local governments, and ensure timely execution.⁶

Jangra et al. (2016)⁶ undertook a SWOT analysis of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and detailed the programs undertaken at varied levels of the government to ensure the success of the cleanliness campaign. In 2015-2016, the State Governments, rolled out sanitization awareness programs and introduced sanitation-related workshops at the state level, while involving the state officials/ District Collectors/ Zilla Panchayat in the process. The workshops proved very effective in providing a platform to deliberate upon key issues pertaining to sanitation, extending from the national to the district level. Another initiative involved calling the 'Champion Collectors' from other states/districts (where these approaches had been successfully practiced) as resource persons to share their experiences. Local governments, such as the district level or Gram Panchayat and Municipal bodies, are responsible for executing the cleanliness campaign at the community level. The local level responsibilities include ensuring the construction and maintenance of toilets, waste management facilities, waste segregation, and cleanliness drives at the city and village levels. Communities played a crucial role in motivating and creating awareness among individuals and families to keep their homes and surroundings clean. Corporate and private organizations voluntarily contributed through their CSR initiative, provided financial and material support, sponsored infrastructure projects, and actively participated in the cleanliness and hygiene awareness programs.⁶

Waste Management: From 2001 to 2011, there have been large state-level disparities in the accessibility of home toilets in rural regions. In the late eighties and nineties, government programs and efforts focused on solid waste management and rural sanitation which included the Central Rural Sanitation Programme and the Total Sanitation Campaign, respectively. Heralding a new era in cleanliness initiatives is the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), which aims to implement effective and sustainable solid waste management procedures throughout the country. SBM's various components and goals include the construction of personal, community, and public toilets, solid waste management techniques, and campaigns to increase public awareness and support capacity building. The ways to fill the financing shortfall in these SBM components may include beneficiary payments, private finance, and private sector corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs and the Swachh Bharat Kosh, a program run by the Ministry of Finance. SBM has emerged as a revolutionary project crucial to India's efforts to implement sustainable Solid Waste Management (SWM)

practices nationwide. To secure the long-term sustainability of SWM practices, the significance of implementing inclusive improvement strategies and paradigm shifts needs to be reiterated. The creation of Swachh Bharat citizen communities, and key SBM efforts like door-to-door rubbish pickup and proper MSW disposal, are meant to increase awareness and promote public engagement.⁷

Funding and Behaviour Change: The SBM system covers a broad network of 4,041 towns and cities in India, with the Performance Fund and Behaviour Change Communication being the significant systemic components. The Performance Fund, on the one hand, offers vital financial assistance for initiatives that concentrate on solid waste management (SWM) and sanitation. The Behaviour Change Communication, on the other hand, aims to increase knowledge and motivate individuals to embrace sanitary and clean activities. Besides, the Urban Local Body and State/Union Territory administrations, form a part of the SBM and are responsible for the supervision and execution of various sanitation and related projects as a part of the mission.⁷

Developing Entrepreneurs: The funding deficit and the monetary aid thereof for the purpose of sanitation endeavours is presently being extended through donations by charities, corporate social responsibility funds, and suggested charges on yearly fees, and the Swachh Bharat Kosh. Banks are being encouraged to create one hundred thousand entrepreneurs in the realm of solid waste management and wastewater treatment, and PPPs are being sought for the construction of lavatories in shared spaces, with an aim to allocate or provide Rs 2 lakh crores in creating and enhancing the cleanliness and sanitation facilities.⁷

The Corporate Connect – Predictors, Ramifications and Contributions

With the aim of bolstering the element of sanitation and cleanliness across India, the government's SBA has been relentless since its launch in 2014. Four years after the launch of SBA, Prakash and Gakhar conducted research on a host of Indian companies in a bid to assess and analyze their participation in the cleanliness campaign. The research further concentrated on recognizing the manifestation of SBA among these relevant companies of Sensex and assessed their practices in support of the campaign. It aimed to ascertain the predictors that affect a company's participation in SBA in India. The study involved thirty companies representing varied sectors of the Indian industry and the required information on the SBA participation and contribution was collated from the company websites. The non-financial aspects for assessing the factors were identified involving a scale

that included culture, role of leadership, and employee participation in fructifying the efforts. Financial ratios and other aspects were sourced from a relevant database. The involvement of organizations in SBA was found to be closely linked to their organizational culture and a price-earnings ratio, with senior management participation having a positive coefficient, albeit lacking statistical significance. The contributions from the study were manifold. Firstly, it recognized the manifestation of SBA among sample companies of Sensex and scrutinized their practices related to the campaign. Secondly, it compiled data from Indian companies that contributed to SBA and examined their activities within the campaign context. Thirdly, it focused on identifying predictors driving a company's participation in SBA. Lastly, logistic regression was applied to 17 financial and organisational variables to identify the predictors of SBA involvement in India. This study paves the way for understanding the factors that may lead the companies to participate in such campaigns in the future and facilitate the availability of such factors. This, in turn, may help guide the businesses to re-evaluate their strategies regarding increased participation in campaigns like SBA and thereby to develop a culture in the respective organizations which is oriented towards sustainability. This may also encourage the active participation from the strategic leadership in the companies to ensure greater success of the initiatives -both financial and otherwise- in the success of SBA and other such campaigns. Further research may include a larger number of organizations in varied sectors to explore the factors contributing towards companies' active participation in campaigns like SBA so that these may be shared and emulated by other companies, thus aiding future sustainability endeavors.⁸

Participating in the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is considered a part of the corporate social responsibilities of the contributing companies. In lieu of this, the government amended Schedule VII of the Companies Act and thereby designated companies' contributions to the "Swachh Bharat Kosh" as eligible CSR spending, highlighting the role of corporates as stakeholders in making India clean. 'Swachh Bharat Kosh' is a dedicated fund for the campaign, collecting contributions from various sources to support its objectives. The financial requirements and the support for the cleanliness campaign from the corporates are thus bolstered by the recognition of the cleanliness activities under the CSR mode.¹

Many Indian business tycoons and businesses have contributed to the various SBA activities over the years. However, there are a variety of reasons why many companies refrain from contributing towards SBM. The

reasons may include bureaucratic impediments, coordination challenges with local governing bodies, expectations of tangible returns, economic conditions, competitive pressures, and the nature of the market. These hurdles may sometimes happen in terms of red tape, which companies may face when they go in for contributing towards the construction and maintenance of toilets thereby diminishing their interest in the process. Also, the returns to the companies by participating in the SBM may usually be intangible, like enhanced corporate reputation or increased customer loyalty; and not in terms of tangible benefits like increased sales or profits leading to a decrease in motivation to be a part of such CSR campaigns. Moreover, in highly competitive markets, companies may refrain from investing in these campaigns to cut costs and take care of their narrow margins. In monopoly markets, on the other hand, companies may be least interested in intangible returns like customer loyalty or company reputation. Thus, economic conditions may also deter companies' participation in CSR initiatives including SBM. The policymakers may hence take a cue from the factors hampering the companies' motivation and take steps to minimize the hurdles for companies to be a part of the phenomenal SBM journey.

The Citizen Connect – Awareness Creation and Attitude Change

A research study in Delhi attempted to explore the perception of the Delhi populace regarding SBM using a sample of students and teaching staff, especially from various educational institutions. The study analysed public perception regarding the SBM implementation and the cleanliness or sanitation improvement through an exploratory factor analysis. The study reemphasized the importance of sanitation in the country's economic development and how the government introduced schemes and measures to increase public awareness towards the relevance and priorities to be given to issues like cleanliness. Such public perception studies may find utility in the framework of policy measures undertaken by the government strategically to make a success out of the Swachh Bharat Mission. Public perception studies undertaken across India on the SBM measures and implementation could also form the foundation involving the citizens' opinion in the SBM initiatives, thereby encouraging their participation in future SBM-related activities. The principal results from the Delhi-based perception study indicated an increased level of awareness regarding cleanliness requirements after the launch of the SBM amongst the citizens. Moreover, the study highlighted the importance of cleanliness being considered next only to Godliness and highlighted its positive effects on the physical as well as the mental state of mind of the citizens. Television and radio continued to be the key media sources contributing to the Swachhta

Mission in terms of stimulating public awareness of cleanliness. However, despite the awareness, the need to have a significant change in the public attitude towards sanitation is the need of the hour, wherein the cleanliness drive may no longer happen as a standalone activity but as a continuous effort from all the public forums. The policymakers may take a cue from this observation and lay more impetus on the attitude-driving measures or strategies in SBM. As per the study, a small percentage of the population still holds on to the perception that the SBM is being conducted only to garner publicity and is not going to be long-term measure, and hence, efforts should also go towards removing such negativities in such people's minds. The study further reiterates that SBM continues to be a very popular initiative amongst the citizens and this positivity for the initiative should be leveraged by the administrators to achieve optimum success in SBM implementation.¹¹ Future research may involve various other regions in India on larger samples, and the data may be collated at various local, state and the national levels to understand the measures to be undertaken to change further the attitude of the public towards the sanitation improvement measures of the SBM. This may form the strong foundation for designing targeted intervention measures to achieve the long-term success of the SBM with public participation and self-motivation.

Conclusion

As with any strategy formulation and implementation process, the success of SBA and such other organizational CSR campaigns or activities depends on the requisite changes in the organizational culture as well as the active role played by the strategic leadership in ensuring the sustainability and self-motivation of the employees throughout the CSR process.⁸ Corporates have made significant contributions to SBM in terms of organizing local campaigns, awareness development programs, and establishment of sanitation facilities across the nation as well as financially in terms of various funds and trusts. However, certain factors remain, like bureaucratic and coordination challenges, expecting tangible returns in terms of sales and profits, the economics of the market, and competition which may be impacted as hurdles. Facilitation of operations should hence be taken care of by the policymakers to ensure better cooperation and contribution by the companies across the spectrum towards the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Moreover, participation in campaigns such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is undertaken by the companies as a part of their corporate social

responsibility strategies. The CSR strategies are still considered standalone plans and not an integral part of the corporate strategies and, hence, in most cases are neither continual nor sustainable. For sustainable competitive advantage, it becomes imperative for the companies to incorporate the formulation and implementation of CSR strategies like the SBA initiatives to be a part of the core corporate strategy. This, in turn, would require an active role to be played by the strategic leadership in the organizations towards such CSR initiatives and, in many cases, a reorientation of the organizational culture to ensure success and related value creation.^{9, 10}

The SBM is a popular government initiative that has significantly increase public awareness of sanitation measures. However, the urgent requirement for citizens is to transform their attitudes or radicalize their approach to cleanliness attainment measures and implementation. This needs to become an integrated part of their everyday lives on an individual and societal level.¹¹ Future researchers may, hence, explore the factors that may induce a change in the public's attitude change in the public towards cleanliness and other such sustainability measures, and thereby, suitable interventions may be designed and implemented by the government.

Notes

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