



Balalatha's

CSB IAS ACADEMY

The Road Map to Mussoorie...



Mains iMPACT – 04/10/2024

10 YEARS OF SWACHH BHARAT MISSION (SBM)

SYLLABUS:

GS 2> Social Justice > Welfare Schemes > Flagship schemes

REFERENCE NEWS:

- The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) marked its 10th anniversary on October 2, 2024. Launched in 2014, the mission aimed to achieve universal sanitation coverage by 2019, in tribute to the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Its primary goals included eliminating open defecation, eradicating manual scavenging, promoting scientific solid waste management, and enhancing overall public health and sanitation.

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION (SBM):

SBM is divided into two main components:

SBM-Grameen (Rural):

- **SBM-Grameen (Rural)**, managed by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, focuses on improving rural sanitation coverage, which was reported at 38.7% at the time of launch and **reached 100% (ODF Status) by 2019..**
- SBM-G aims to sustain sanitation coverage achievements and focuses on comprehensive waste management, including plastic, biodegradable solid waste, greywater, and faecal sludge.
- It's currently in Phase-II (2020-21 to 2024-25) with a budget of Rs. 1,40,881 crores.
- The current focus is to advance these areas to ODF Plus status, with 85% of villages already achieving this
- States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh are leading with the highest number of ODF Plus villages.

SBM-Urban (Urban):

- **SBM-Urban (Urban)**, overseen by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, targets urban areas to eradicate open defecation and improve waste management through initiatives like door-to-door waste collection and the establishment of scientific processing facilities.
- SBM-U's first phase aimed at making urban India **ODF by 2019, a target successfully met with all urban areas declared ODF.**
- The continuation, **SBM-U 2.0**, launched in the 2021-22 budget period and set to run until 2026, focuses on advancing urban areas to **ODF++ and beyond**, promoting sustainable sanitation and a circular economy.
- Significant improvements in waste processing were observed, with a current rate of **75% in 2023, up from 17% in 2014.**

ODF Classifications:

- **ODF:** No open defecation is observed at any time of day.
- **ODF+:** Public toilets are functional and well-maintained, with no open defecation.
- **ODF++:** Areas have managed faecal sludge and sewage effectively, with safe treatment processes in place.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS

- **Sanitation Coverage and Public Health:**
 - The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) has been pivotal in increasing sanitation coverage, especially rural sanitation coverage, from 38.7% to achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status across India by 2019, leading to significant health improvements.
 - For instance, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** reported that enhanced sanitation facilities contributed to **300,000 fewer diarrheal disease-related deaths** in 2019 compared to 2014. Additionally, a study published in the journal Nature highlighted that the mission may have led to a reduction of **60,000 to 70,000 infant deaths annually** from 2014 to 2020.
- **Waste Management Enhancements:**
 - Beyond toilet construction, SBM has expanded its focus to comprehensive waste management, including solid and liquid waste.
 - The mission has witnessed substantial **improvements in urban waste processing**, with rates rising from **17% in 2014 to 75% in 2023**. These efforts are supported by significant financial investments and initiatives **promoting recycling and the circular economy**.
- **Economic Impact on Household Savings:**
 - Families in ODF-designated villages have reported significant economic benefits, with **UNICEF estimating an average annual saving of Rs 50,000 per household** due to reduced health-related expenses. This reduction in costs is largely attributed to decreased incidences of sanitation-related illnesses, which lead to fewer hospital visits and lower medical costs, especially noted in regions like Uttar Pradesh.
- **Global Recognition and Leadership:**
 - SBM has garnered global acclaim, with **leaders like Bill Gates and Ratan Tata**, and organizations such as **the WHO**, praising the initiative for its role in **promoting sustainable development goals**, particularly in improving living conditions for India's poorer segments and women.
- **Community and Behavioral Change:**
 - A vital part of SBM's strategy has involved mobilizing communities through campaigns like **Swachhata Hi Seva**, which emphasize **public participation** in maintaining cleanliness. These campaigns have successfully fostered a sense of **civic responsibility and pride among citizens**, contributing to sustained cleanliness efforts across the nation.
- **Groundwater Safety Enhancement in ODF Regions:**
 - Achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in areas significantly reduces the risk of **groundwater contamination by human waste**.
 - **A UN study reports a 12.7-fold decrease in such risks**, which is particularly vital in regions like Punjab and West Bengal. In these areas, groundwater serves as the main source of drinking water, and historical contamination has often resulted in serious public health issues. This marked improvement in

groundwater quality underscores the environmental and health benefits of the Swachh Bharat Mission's efforts in sanitation.

- **Improving Women's Safety and Privacy:**
 - The construction of household toilets has led to an increased sense of security among women, with a **UNICEF report noting that 93% of women feel safer** due to the reduced need to venture out into vulnerable situations for defecation. This improvement is particularly notable in rural areas where women previously faced dangers during late-night or early-morning hours.
- **Cultural and Heritage Site Preservation:**
 - The Swachh Iconic Places initiative has mobilized resources from both public and private sectors to maintain cleanliness at **India's iconic cultural and historical sites**. Successful examples include the cleanliness drives at the Taj Mahal and the Ghats of Varanasi, which have improved not only aesthetics but also public and international perceptions.
- **Recognition and Motivation through National Cleanliness Awards:**
 - National cleanliness awards have been instrumental in motivating cities and towns to improve their sanitation and waste management systems. Cities like **Indore and Surat** have received accolades for their exceptional efforts in maintaining high standards of cleanliness, setting benchmarks for other urban areas.

CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS WITH SWACHH BHARAT MISSION (SBM)

- **Infrastructure and Quality Issues:**
 - The construction **quality of toilets** under SBM has been questioned, with concerns about their durability and effectiveness.
 - Some studies and audits, like the **Comptroller and Auditor General report of 2020**, have raised doubts regarding the government's claims about the success of the initiative due to these infrastructure issues. Moreover, in certain urban slums and rapidly urbanizing areas, there remains a gap in access to public toilets, highlighting the uneven distribution of sanitation facilities
- **Environmental and Waste Management Challenges:**
 - The link between toilet construction and waste treatment is insufficiently established, leading to environmental contamination from improper disposal of faecal sludge. The mission has struggled with effective waste management, **particularly in handling and recycling plastic waste**, and there is a notable lack of success in technological solutions **like waste-to-energy plants**.
- **Social and Behavioral Barriers:**
 - Cultural norms and social behaviors continue to impact toilet usage negatively, with some households using **toilets for storage rather than sanitation**. Additionally, caste-based disparities persist in sanitation access and usage, with some upper caste households showing higher rates of non-usage.
- **Resource Allocation and Privatization Concerns:**
 - The centralized approach to achieving toilet construction targets has overshadowed community-driven efforts. There are concerns about the **privatization of sanitation services**, where sanitation work is outsourced to private contractors, **sometimes perpetuating caste discrimination**. This approach raises questions about the mission's inclusivity and effectiveness.
- **Human Resource Shortfalls:**
 - There is an acute shortage of sanitation inspectors which hinders effective monitoring and maintenance of sanitation facilities. For instance, in regions like

Himachal Pradesh, the **shortage of inspectors** has been critical, affecting the overall management and success of sanitation programs.

- **Policy and Administrative Challenges:**
 - SBM's focus has been criticized for being too narrow, primarily concentrating on **construction targets without enough emphasis on holistic, sustainable sanitation solutions**. The need for a more integrated and decentralized approach that includes behavior change, public participation, and linking with other development programs like Jal Jeevan Mission is increasingly evident.

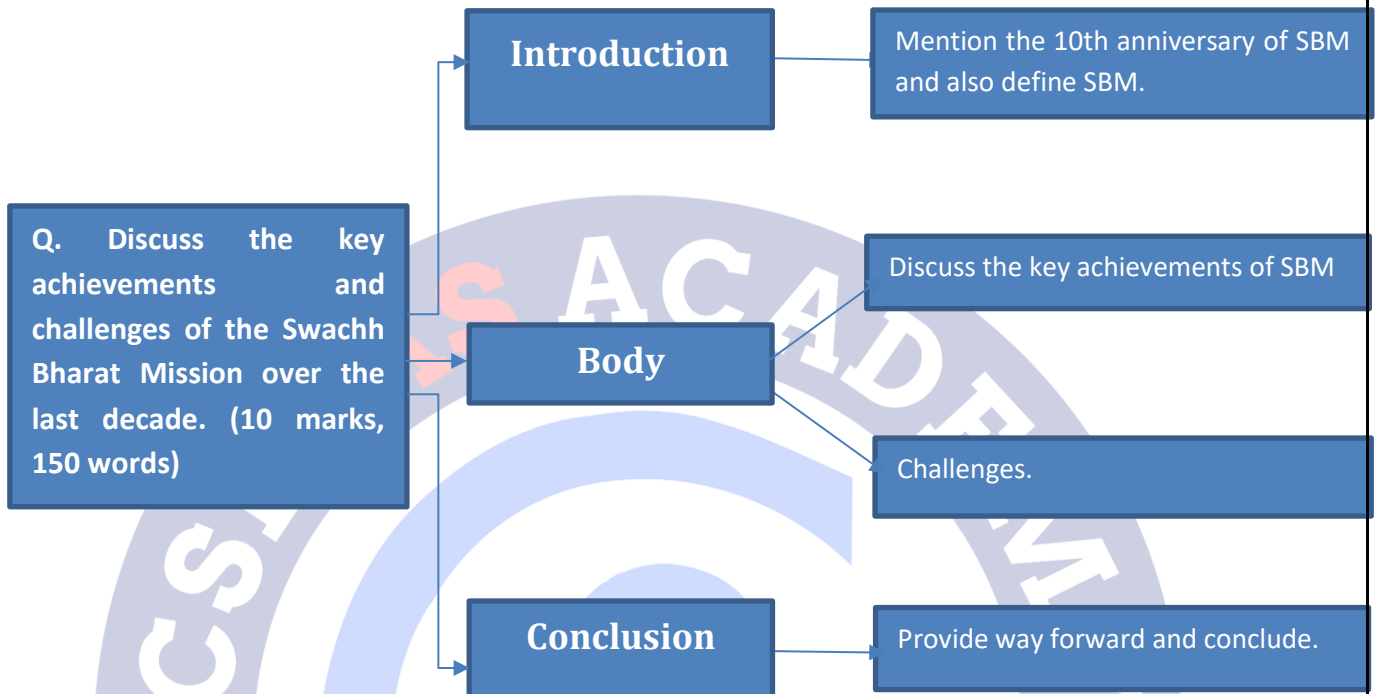
WAY FORWARD:

- **Holistic and Integrated Approach:** Transition from a primarily construction-focused approach to a holistic model that includes robust waste management systems, sustainable practices, and comprehensive public health initiatives. Integrating SBM with other development programs like Jal Jeevan Mission will provide a more coordinated and effective approach to sanitation and water availability.
- **Decentralization and Community Participation:** Encourage decentralized, community-driven efforts that empower local bodies and communities to manage and sustain sanitation facilities. This involves strengthening community engagement through awareness programs and involving local stakeholders in the planning and execution of sanitation projects.
- **Behavioral Change and Education:** Amplify efforts in behavior change communication to address cultural and social barriers to toilet use. Educational campaigns should focus on the benefits of proper sanitation practices, aiming to shift long-standing perceptions and habits.
- **Technological Innovations and Infrastructure Quality:** Invest in research and development of cost-effective, low-maintenance sanitation technologies that are suitable for diverse geographical and cultural contexts of India. Addressing the quality issues in toilet construction to ensure durability and usability is critical.
- **Enhanced Monitoring and Accountability:** Strengthen monitoring mechanisms to ensure the functionality and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure. Implement regular audits, increase the number of sanitation inspectors, and utilize technology for real-time monitoring to enhance transparency and accountability.
- **Addressing Social Inequities:** Tackle caste-based and socioeconomic disparities in sanitation access and usage head-on. Policies should aim to be inclusive, ensuring that vulnerable and marginalized communities are not only beneficiaries but also active participants in sanitation initiatives.

CONCLUSION: The Swachh Bharat Mission has made commendable strides in addressing India's sanitation challenges over the past decade. However, as the mission evolves, it faces the critical task of transforming from a quantitative success to a qualitative and sustainable one. By adopting a more integrated, inclusive, and sustainable approach, the SBM can truly achieve its goal of a 'Clean India,' aligning with both national priorities and global sustainability standards. This re-envisioned approach will not only improve sanitation and public health outcomes but will also foster a sense of dignity and equity among all citizens, making Swachhata a shared national value and a permanent reality.

PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Discuss the key achievements and challenges of the Swachh Bharat Mission over the last decade. (10 marks, 150 words)

APPROACH:**MODEL ANSWER:**

Celebrating its **10th anniversary on October 2, 2024**, the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched on the same day in 2014, as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, with the aim of achieving a "Clean India" by 2019. The mission's comprehensive goals included eliminating open defecation, eradicating manual scavenging, promoting scientific solid waste management, and enhancing public health and sanitation. Over the decade, SBM has made significant progress towards these objectives, although some challenges still persist.

Key Achievements:

1. **Sanitation Coverage and Public Health:** SBM has been instrumental in increasing rural sanitation coverage from 38.7% to achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status across India, significantly reducing health issues related to poor sanitation, such as diarrheal diseases. The WHO reported that enhanced sanitation facilities contributed to 300,000 fewer diarrheal disease-related deaths in 2019 compared to 2014.
2. **Waste Management Enhancements:** The mission expanded its focus beyond toilet construction to comprehensive waste management, including solid and liquid waste. Urban waste processing rates have risen from 17% in 2014 to 75% in 2023, supported by significant financial investments and initiatives promoting recycling and a circular economy.
3. **Economic Impact on Household Savings:** Families in ODF-designated villages have reported significant economic benefits, with UNICEF estimating an average annual saving of Rs 50,000 per household due to reduced health-related expenses, leading to fewer hospital visits and lower medical costs.
4. **Global Recognition and Leadership:** The SBM has garnered global acclaim, praised by international figures like Bill Gates and organizations such as the WHO for its role

in promoting sustainable development goals, particularly improving living conditions for India's poorer segments and women.

5. **Community and Behavioral Change:** Campaigns like Swachhata Hi Seva have emphasized public participation in maintaining cleanliness, fostering a sense of civic responsibility and pride among citizens, contributing to sustained cleanliness efforts across the nation.

Challenges:

1. **Infrastructure and Quality Issues:** Concerns about the durability and effectiveness of the constructed toilets persist, with some audits revealing gaps in the claimed successes of the initiative, especially in urban slums and rapidly urbanizing areas.
2. **Environmental and Waste Management Challenges:** The link between toilet construction and waste treatment remains weak, leading to environmental contamination from improper disposal of faecal sludge, with insufficient success in technological solutions like waste-to-energy plants.
3. **Social and Behavioral Barriers:** Cultural norms and social behaviors continue to negatively impact toilet usage, with some households using toilets for storage rather than sanitation. Additionally, caste-based disparities in sanitation access and usage persist.
4. **Resource Allocation and Privatization Concerns:** The centralized approach to achieving toilet construction targets has sometimes overshadowed community-driven efforts, raising questions about the mission's inclusivity and effectiveness.
5. **Human Resource Shortfalls:** An acute shortage of sanitation inspectors hinders effective monitoring and maintenance of sanitation facilities, critically affecting the overall management and success of sanitation programs in regions like Himachal Pradesh.

Way Forward:

- **Integrate Programs:** Link SBM with other developmental programs like Jal Jeevan Mission to provide a coordinated approach to sanitation and water availability.
- **Decentralize Efforts:** Empower local bodies and communities to take active roles in planning, executing, and sustaining sanitation facilities.
- **Enhance Behavioral Change:** Expand educational campaigns to shift cultural norms and behaviors regarding sanitation usage and maintenance.
- **Improve Infrastructure Quality:** Focus on constructing durable and low-maintenance sanitation facilities suitable for diverse geographical settings.
- **Increase Monitoring and Accountability:** Strengthen the inspection and auditing mechanisms to ensure the functionality and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure.
- **Address Social Inequities:** Implement policies that ensure inclusivity and address caste-based and socioeconomic disparities in sanitation access.

As the Swachh Bharat Mission progresses beyond its initial decade, it stands at a critical juncture. While it has made notable strides in enhancing sanitation and public health, persistent challenges require strategic shifts. By adopting a holistic, inclusive, and sustainable approach, SBM can achieve its goals more effectively, ensuring long-term benefits and truly realizing the vision of a 'Clean India.' This will not only enhance public health but also strengthen social unity and environmental sustainability, making cleanliness a universal norm in India.