



INSIGHTSIAS

SIMPLIFYING IAS EXAM PREPARATION

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Sanitation for a Healthy Society

Table of Contents

SANITATION ECONOMY AND DIGNITY OF SANITATION WORKERS.....	3
Background: Emergence of Sanitation as an Economy	3
Government's Initiatives towards Sanitation	3
Dignity to the Sanitation Workers	3
Way Forward.....	4
THE PEOPLE'S POLICY.....	6
SUSTAINING BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE.....	7
Introduction	7
Behavioural Patterns	7
Recommendations.....	7
SANITISING THE COUNTRY	8
Introduction	8
Gandhiji at Champaran	8
At the Ashrams.....	8
In Public Meetings and Municipal Receptions	8
In Periodicals.....	8
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT: THE WAY FORWARD	10
Challenges	10
Way Forward.....	10

Sanitation Economy and Dignity of Sanitation Workers

Background: Emergence of Sanitation as an Economy

- The **sanitation sector has emerged as a big economy in India** in recent years and the future potential is immense.
- Sanitation economy is not just about toilets but it also includes provision of clean drinking water, elimination of waste and converting them into useful resources and digitized sanitation system that optimizes data for operating efficiencies, maintenance, consumer use, and health information insights.
- **Sanitation has the potential to contribute in a big way to the growth and employment of many other sectors of India and global economy**, most notably to sectors such as health, consumer goods and agriculture sector and new and renewable energy.
- At the international level, India's pioneering steps in the field of sanitation have been lauded by various bilateral, multilateral and plurilateral bodies.
- It is been touted that India's success in this sector would help in achieving the global Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of providing access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and ending open defecation by 2030.

Government's Initiatives towards Sanitation

- **The first building block of having a 'New India' by 2022 is the pledge towards a 'Clean India'.**
- The major initiative towards sanitation was the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) with an aim to accelerate sanitation coverage to achieve an Open Defecation Free (ODF) and Clean India by 2 October, 2019.
- Since the launch of the SBM, the Government has built 1007.98 lakh toilets in the rural areas, thereby enhancing percentage of individual households with Latrine (IHHL) coverage to 100% - a whopping jump of 61.3% between 2014 and 2019.
- A new **Ministry of Jal Shakti** was created in May 2019 by reorganizing the existing ministries and departments.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)** to bring piped-water supply to all households (Har Ghar Jal) by 2024.
- Government's initiative to curb single – use plastics from 2 October, 2019 will help in significant reduction in littering. This will not only scale up the ongoing sanitation movement significantly but will also help in combating land and water pollution and improving health of the citizens.

Dignity to the Sanitation Workers

- Sanitation workers are one of the major contributors to this vision. However, the workers involved in this occupation suffer from social stigma with respect to their work, especially the manual scavengers.
- **Key initiatives taken by the Government for the betterment and welfare of the sanitation workers:**
- **Legal Protection for Eliminating Manual Scavenging**
 - In order to prohibit employment of manual scavengers, the Government had enacted Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013)
- **Ensuring Minimum Wages, Safe Working Conditions and Pension Benefits**
 - Ministry of Labour and Employment has enacted the **Code on Wages Bill, 2019**.

- This bill also provides for higher wage premium for workers engaged in arduous and hazardous work in difficult circumstances and therefore will benefit millions of sanitation workers.
- The code also prohibits gender discrimination in wages, recruitment, and conditions of work, which will benefit women sanitation workers.
- As a large proportion of sanitation workers are in the unorganized sector, the provisions of the proposed **Social Security Code** will provide the sanitation workers their legal rights to social security.
- **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan – dhan (PM – SYM)** to ensure old – age protection for unorganized workers, which will benefit the sanitation workers.
- **Housing, Education, Financial Assistance and Skill Development Schemes**
 - **‘Housing for All’** under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation aims at providing housing facility to the citizens.
 - **‘Pre-Matric Scholarship to the Children of those engaged in Occupations involving cleaning and prone to health hazards’**, the children of manual scavengers, tanners and flayers, waste pickers and those engaged in hazardous cleaning are also provided scholarship for pursuing their studies up to 10th.
 - The **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)**, an Apex Corporation for the all – round socio – economic upliftment of the safai karamcharis, scavengers and their dependents throughout India by creating alternate means of livelihoods to enable them live with dignity, honour, and pride along with the mainstream of the society.
- **Protecting Sanitation Workers through Ayushman Bharat**
 - **Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)** introduced has immense potential to benefit the sanitation workers and in restoring their dignity given the fact that a large proportion of them belong to poor and vulnerable families.
 - This will help sanitation workers in terms of reducing their out – of – pocket expenditure on health and will provide them flexibility to allocate their household resources towards other important family needs.

Way Forward

- While muvh has been achieved in improving the sanitation situation in the country and in restoring the dignity of the sanitation workers, much is left to be achieved.
- Maintaining ODF status is important so that villagers are not returning to the old practices of open defecation.
- We must focus on putting in place a **robust monitoring mechanism to check the condition of sanitation at the district and Panchayat level.**
- Although we are ODF, but the country is not garbage and litter free. Therefore, we must **focus on circular economy for converting our waste into resources.** The first step in this regard will be 100 per cent achievements in terms of waste segregation, successful disposal, and streamlining waste infrastructure.
- We must also **focus on sustained behavioral changes** through a trained workforce for curbing single-use plastics and thereby making India completely garbage and litter free.
- Despite a ban on manual scavenging, its existence is reported from time to time. Therefore, use of technology can play a key role in addressing this issue.
- **Prioritization and faster identification of insanitary latrines and manual scavengers** through a time – bound plan must be seriously and earnestly pursued so that effective rehabilitation of

manual scavengers through various welfare and income generating scheme can be done at a much larger scale and in a mission mode.

Questions

1) Do you agree sanitation will remain a mirage even after India stops defecating in the open? Discuss the challenges with respect to sanitation aspects in India and what needs to be done to overcome the same?

2) The misery or sanitation workers need to be put to an end, for the success of swachh Bharat mission. In this regard, analyze the problems faced by sanitation workers and ways to resolve it

The People's Policy

- The four Ps namely, **Political leadership, Public financing, Partnerships and Peoples' participation** provided the SBM – G its strategic focus and administrative disruption which led to efficient on-ground implementation.
- **Mahatma Gandhi dreamt of an India where no one had to suffer the indignity of open defecation.**
- Five years on, Team Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G) has identified **four key pillars of India's sanitation revolution**, which can, more or less, be applied to any large – scale transformation in the world.
- **First is political leadership.** Arguably, the biggest game – changer for the SBM-G was the Prime Minister investing his personal political capital in the mission.
- Various Chief Ministers took up the cause, creating a domino-like effect, cascading leadership to the Chief Secretary and in turn to Collectors, all the way down to Sarpanchs at the grassroots level.
- **Second is public financing.** Over Rs. 1 Lakh crore was committed to ensuring universal access to sanitation, thereby backing the political will with budgetary support.
- About 90% of the 10 crore households which received toilets were from socially and economically weaker sections of society and they received financial incentives to build and use toilets.
- **Third is partnership.** The SBM-G partnered with implementers and influencers alike – national and international development agencies, media houses, civil society, celebrities, as well as all departments/ ministries of the Government of India.
- This “all hands-on deck” approach, making sanitation everyone's business, helped to mainstream it into the national consciousness.
- And **fourth is people's participation.** The SBM-G trained over half a million swachhagrahis, grassroot motivators, who triggered behavior change in every village of India.
- A large-scale transformation can be truly successful if it captures the imagination of the people and becomes a people's movement or a Jan Andolan.
- The SBM-G made sanitation glamorous by engaging extensively with the media, leveraging popular culture, and associating Bollywood stars, sportspersons and other influencers to promote the message of sanitation.

Sustaining Behavioural Change

Introduction

- With Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), the country witnessed a silent revolution in the construction of toilets.
- A major differentiating feature of SBM from all other earlier programmes has been its demand-driven nature where the primary objective is to bring about behaviour change leading to the generation of demand for construction of toilets as well as to increase the use of toilets.
- Construction of toilets by itself does not ensure that the rural population will use toilets on a regular basis.
- There are significant cultural and behavioural factors that act as barriers to the use of toilets. SBM focuses on collective behaviour change of the entire community.
- However, many villages are not homogeneous and are fragmented along the caste and religious lines. Caste-based notion of purity and pollution makes it difficult to construct pit latrine which requires emptying it in future.
- Thus, adoption of toilets is not always linked to the presence or absence of water or toilets but to **'social determinants' and social convention** reinforced by traditional beliefs.
- The challenge of behaviour change is often compounded by the diversity in Indian society, and therefore, would require more contextual understanding.
- Identify and analyse the principal drivers (social, physical, and behavioural) that motivate people to stop defecation in the open, the effective elements of Information, Education, Communication (IEC) for toilet construction and behaviour change.

Behavioural Patterns

- The predominant reason for toilet construction in the household is privacy and convenience followed by peer pressure, prestige in society, spouse pressure, and persuasion of Panchayat leaders, political leaders, health and social workers.
- Villages having piped source of drinking water were more likely to have both access to toilet and use of toilets.
- The gender of the household head also impacts access to the toilet. **A female-headed household is more likely to use toilets than Male-headed household.**
- Insufficient availability of water at various times of the year has a negative implication on the usage of the toilet.
- Access to information regarding Government schemes and financial assistance for toilet construction are also contributing factors for construction and use of toilet, respectively.
- **Different initiatives such as morning vigilance, whistle blowing, meetings, training, etc. have been taken to create awareness against open defecation.**

Recommendations

- The programme may include the provision of **more than one toilet for larger households.**
- More emphasis may be given for **information dissemination at the ground level.** Health and social workers can play a larger role in influencing people.
- Improvement of sanitation is linked with other indicators of living conditions. Hence, it is important to have a **better infrastructure at the household level as well as public service.**
- Better water supply service, housing, construction of the bathroom influences the access and use of the toilet.
- Also, emphasis on **female literacy is imperative for better sanitation coverage.**

Sanitising the Country

Introduction

- Gandhiji, while travelling the length and breadth of India during first two years after returning from South Africa, had realised that sanitation and social hygiene was a huge problem.

Gandhiji at Champaran

- The seriousness of the problem of sanitation and hygiene among rural populace in the country had become evident to Gandhiji when they began their work in Champaran.
- Gandhiji's conviction about the need of education, training and practice for orientation and aptitude led him to teach sanitation and hygiene in Champaran and in Satyagraha Ashram Schools.
- **Sanitation and hygiene became indispensable and foundational work in all the political programmes and social reforms.**

At the Ashrams

- For Gandhiji, sanitation and hygiene became an important agenda in India.
- **Gandhiji's desire to remove the blot of untouchability from the Indian society** for good compelled him to work on toilets and hygiene.
- He had not accepted the social tradition of the scavenging work to be done by a section of people who were condemned to do and further condemned for doing so.
- The Ashram had special stress upon engaging no outside labour for this work. The members themselves attended to the whole of the sanitation in turns.
- Gandhiji would welcome the zealous, committed youth with nationalist fervour who desired to join Ashrams but would have to pass the test of cleaning the toilet bucket.
- **Sanitation and hygiene were on agenda in Sevagram Ashram too**, which was Gandhiji's home from April 1936 to August 1947.

In Public Meetings and Municipal Receptions

- Gandhiji addressed many public gathering, meetings, small groups, volunteers, women and inmates of the Ashrams.
- On most of these occasions he brought up the subject of sanitation and hygiene.
- In almost every Congress major convention Gandhi in his speech touched upon the sanitation issue. **For Gandhi, insanitation was an evil.** He had said,
 - There is a **Trinity of Evil-insanitation, poverty and idleness** that you will have to be faced with and you will fight them with broom-sticks, quinine and castor oil and, If you will believe me, with the spinning-wheel.
- He considered sanitation work as one of the most important works of the municipalities. He developed an admiration for the municipal administration in the West with regards to sanitation.

In Periodicals

- Gandhiji edited and contributed articles and notes to several periodicals. **He wrote about sanitation and hygiene related issues frequently in Navajivan and Young India and later in Harijan.**
- Gandhiji was more decent in using an expression 'open evacuation' in place of open defecation that is used in the national and international reports in present times.
- He pointed out in the article that not using latrines and open evacuation practice was the cause for many diseases.
- Gandhiji continued to write about sanitation and hygiene at every opportunity.

- He said, let me assure you that **education in three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)** is as nothing compared to a sound grounding in the elements of hygiene and sanitation.
- Gandhiji continued to tell students and workers about the importance of sanitation work and advised them to take it up as the first task.
- From 1946 to January 1948 he intensified his emphasis on education for sanitation and hygiene.
- On 29 January, 1948, a day before he was martyred, he drafted the Constitution for the proposed Lok Sevak Sangh. In this document the sixth function of a sevak was drafted as under.
- He shall educate the village folk in sanitation and hygiene and take all measures for prevention of ill health and diseases among them.
- Sanitation and hygiene were and had reminded a priority for Gandhiji's all his life and it appeared in his last.

Questions:

1) Mahatma Gandhi said "Sanitation is more important than independence". He made cleanliness and sanitation an integral part of the Gandhian way of living. Analyse how Sanitation and hygiene became indispensable and foundational work in Gandhi's political programmes and social reforms.

2) Critically analyse Gandhiji's views on sanitation and hygiene.

Solid Waste Management: The Way Forward

- **The main objective of an efficient Solid Waste Management (SWM) system is to maximize resource recovery and energy generation from waste** in the processing facility and minimise waste disposal in landfills, which weighs heavily on our ever-shrinking land resources and also is a potential source of air, soil, and water contamination.
- The responsibility of the waste generator lies essentially in **proper segregation of the waste** which is the core requirement of effective solid waste management.
- Solid Waste Management is a major problem in India, where urbanization, industrialization, and economic growth have resulted in increased municipal solid waste (MSW) generation.
- The burgeoning population and the improvement in living standards of the people have only compounded this problem.
- Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) notified **MSW (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000** and the **revamped Solid Waste Management Rules in 2016** to ensure proper solid waste management in India.
- Various initiatives are being taken in different parts of the country; however, a lot still remains to be done to comprehensively address the issue related to Solid Waste Management.

Challenges

- **The various challenges faced in implementation of SWM Rules include the following:**
 - Segregation of waste at source by waste generators.
 - Lack of infrastructure for over collection and transportation of waste.
 - Availability of land for setting up of waste collection and transportation facilities.
 - Budgetary provisions for above.
 - Techno-economically viable solutions for fresh & legacy Waste.
 - Management of legacy waste,
 - Rural areas not covered in most of the States/UTs and
 - Enforcement issues.

Way Forward

- Focus of the SWM is to maximise resource recovery from waste so as to facilitate availability of these resources for efficient SWM.
- The major steps in this direction would include:
 - Creating **public awareness** for involvement of different stakeholders for SWM.
 - Development of ULB-wise action plan for collection, segregation, transportation and processing of waste. Inputs from model cities like Indore, Ambikapur and Pune may be taken for development and implementation of these plans.
 - Emphasising on **setting up of waste processing facilities** rather than waste disposal facilities as in the case of Chhattisgarh.
 - Giving fillip to research and development activities with focus on resource recovery from waste.
 - Capacity building in various regimes of SWM.
 - Laying down of an appropriate government framework at State and district levels.
 - Clear allocation of responsibility to ULB's and waste generators for setting up of infrastructure and for involving informal sector in waste collection/ segregation and
 - Adequate technical support to ULB's for processing technology and best practices in waste management.

Questions:

- 1) The next step in addressing sanitation woes should be a focus on waste management. Analyze.**

- 2) India needs to shift towards a Solid waste management plan alongside the existing Swachh Bharat mission and look beyond toilets. Discuss.**