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Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan: A Key Initiative of Rural Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

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Abstract: The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan for urban areas and the Gramin Swachh Kendra for villages are both part of the same Swachhata programme. Special programmes are included in the Swachhata Abhiyan for students also. On September 25, 2014, the Swachh Vidyalaya Campaign was launched, parallel with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which is essentially a campaign to encourage students to maintain cleanliness. The government has focused separately on encouraging students to establish healthy habits because a healthy generation will help the country's progress. Without the passionate support of the Indian people, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan would not have been a substantial undertaking.

Keywords: Gramin Swachh Kendra, Swachh Vidyalaya Campaign, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

Introduction

India is a country in the process of development, and the development is determined by the entire development of the nation and its citizens, not just its economic growth. To be considered developed, the nation must have both good wealth and health for its citizens, and this can be achieved through individual effort. Even if one has completed higher education or owns a global corporation, and the nation has not progressed from any other perspective, he will not be considered developed because the nation is his identity. India still lacks basic knowledge about cleanliness, so it is everyone's responsibility to help and educate the public (Burke, 2017). Without their support, no government initiative will be successful. On October 2, 2014, the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, began the "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan," a nationwide programme. An extensive programme to promote cleanliness was launched throughout India, including rural areas. The cleaning campaign was initiated by the prime minister himself, who took up the broom and scrubbed the neighbouring streets and dusty places nearby (Infinity Learn, n.a.).

Both the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan for urban areas and the Gramin Swachh Kendra for villages fall under the same Swachhata programme. As such, the cleanliness campaign was launched on a very large scale and divided into many categories. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is responsible for

overseeing the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in urban areas. The primary goals of the Urban Swachh Bharat Abhiyan are:

- To get rid of open defecation in cities
- Manual trapping must be disposed of
- To furnish household toilets to 66.42 Lakh individuals
- To construct 2.52 lakh community and 2.56 lakh public toilets in the city
- Enhancement of Capacity for Urban Local Bodies
- To provide door-to-door service for structured technical and contemporary solid waste management in 4014 cities.

The Urban Swachh Bharat Abhiyan seeks to accomplish all of these goals and completely rid every city of ODF (Open Defecation Free). The Swachh Bharat Abhiyanis are concerned about Open defecation as the major issue because it causes a variety of ailments. All the states declared themselves to be ODF-free, and the mission was generally deemed successful. The first state to have this status was Sikkim (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2019).

The Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation is in charge of the Swachh Bharat Mission for Rural Areas. The Rural Swachh Bharat Abhiyan's primary goal is to encourage rural residents to adopt clean living practices and healthy lifestyles (Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, 2019). Rural Indians lack basic health and hygiene knowledge, which causes a number of illnesses, particularly in children, and affects their health (Panda, 2020). There is a significant amount of money spent by the government each year treating various illnesses brought on by unhealthy habits. Therefore, it is preferable to raise people's awareness of health and cleanliness, as doing so will both keep them healthy and save them money.

It is challenging to educate people about the advantages of hygiene due to the large population living in rural areas in India. This makes maintaining cleanliness a significant struggle for the country. Some common illnesses, such as diarrhoea and pneumonia, are brought on by bad habits and can be avoided by practising hygiene (Gupta, 2021). Creating and maintaining healthy habits is a major challenge. Additionally, the government has raised money for advertising, which is a difficult task. Even if we have succeeded in our objectives, keeping the same enthusiasm among the people is a challenging task.

Students Participation in Swachh Bharat Mission

During the launch of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the Prime Minister stated that every pupil and child would be involved in the promotion of cleanliness throughout all of India. As a result, he designated every student in India as the campaign's brand ambassador. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is an example of a programme where each person's contribution is valued highly and equally. Although all Indians must participate in the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, it is the student's participation that will have the greatest impact on the campaign's long-term effectiveness.

Role of Students from Urban Areas in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

- The educational authorities need to take the initiative to enact a new regulation that would require all students to attend a class on cleanliness, its advantages, and the costs associated with a lack of it. Additionally, the authorities should guarantee that each student is present in that class.
- Proper sanitation and hygiene habits should be taught to the pupils, including twice daily tooth brushing, routine bathing, nail trimming, washing hands before meals, and avoiding unhealthy and stale foods etc.

- Several cleanliness initiatives should be organised by the students under the direction of their teachers, such as cleaning up their classroom, school, cafeteria, play areas, and the areas around their school.
- The pupils should dispose of all of their unwanted items in dustbins, and they should also encourage their other students to do the same.
- The pupils can organise plantation projects in their free time where they and their friends can plant a variety of plants on vacant lots close to their schools, homes, and towns.
- By taking pictures of a location before and after a cleanliness drive and posting them on social media, one can strongly influence other people to use cleanliness to make improvements in their surroundings.

By keeping the school clean both inside and outside, students may send an important message to society. Littering, particularly in public spaces, is the main problem plaguing Indian cities. In order to deter future littering, students should show initiative by cleaning and beautifying these areas.

Role of Students from Rural Areas in Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

- Regularly teaching pupils about healthy habits and their importance should be the responsibility of authorities and committed teachers because students from rural areas need to be aware of them.
- Rural populations frequently use dustbins almost nowhere, which is the main reason for launching a cleanliness campaign there. Both at home and at school, students should make it a habit to use the trash can, and they should also ask their parents to do the same.
- The students can visit each neighbouring residence in their hamlet and urge residents to refrain from open defecation in public by outlining its drawbacks. They might advise them to use the facilities in public places.
- Since most rural residents are still unaware that the government provides funds for the construction of household toilets, students should educate rural residents about the government programme and the application process.

Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan

Special programmes are included in the Swachhta Abhiyan for students. A cleanliness programme designed specifically for students' benefit in order to give them access to proper toilets and in still in them good hygiene practises. Building separate restrooms for boys and girls is another key component. When pupil maintain proper hygiene, their health will be good, which will encourage them to be active and have fewer sick days. This will help them perform well in school and improve their financial position.

On September 25, 2014, the Swachh Vidyalaya Campaign was launched, parallel with the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which is essentially a campaign to encourage students to maintain cleanliness. A vital component of the campaign is to ensure that every school in India has a functional and well-maintained water supply, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. The terms "water, sanitation, and hygiene" in schools pertain to a combination of technical and human development elements that are required to create a conducive learning environment and to promote or foster acceptable health and hygiene practices. The technical components include facilities for teachers and students to use soap, toilets, and drinking water on the school premises. The human development components are the initiatives that enhance the school's reputation and the children's practices that aid in the prevention of water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases.

Benefits of water, hygiene and sanitation for school students

- Water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools ensure a healthy learning environment as well as make sure that pupils are protected from illness and expulsion. This is the initial step in creating a physical learning environment that is conducive to learning as well as health.
- Girls are at a higher risk of dropping out of school, primarily because many find it difficult to do so when restrooms and washrooms are not private, secure, or even available. An impediment to attendance is reduced when schools provide suitable, gender-separated facilities.
- Good hygiene supports school nutrition as well. Before consuming the school lunch, students should wash their hands with soap to help stop illness transmission. Instead of consuming bacteria, pathogens, or viruses, children receive the intended nutritional advantages.
- By providing access to clean water, toilets, and hygiene facilities in schools, equity is encouraged. All children have an equal right to access to facilities for sanitation, cleanliness, and safe drinking water, and all children benefit from the better hygiene practices encouraged in schools.
- A child feels prouder of their school and neighbourhood when it is clean. It gives each student the opportunity to be an agent of change for the improvement of water, sanitation, and hygiene conditions in their homes as well as their communities.

Swachh Vidyalaya – The Essential Components

A set of fundamental interventions related to both the technical and human development facets of an effective water, sanitation, and hygiene programme must be provided in every school in the nation (Ministry of Education, 2014). The following list includes these crucial components:

Sanitation

Boys and girls have their bathrooms, and one unit typically has one toilet and three urinals. The ratio should be one unit for every 40 pupils. Menstrual hygiene management amenities include soap, a private changing area, sufficient water to wash clothes, containers and an incinerator for disposing of menstrual waste.

Daily hand washing with soap before mid-day meal

Adequate group hand washing facilities that allow groups of 10–12 pupils to wash their hands simultaneously. The hand washing station should use the least amount of water possible and be simple, scalable, and sustainable. These hand-washing facilities can be developed using local resources.

Before the midday meal is served, teachers oversee group hand washing with soap sessions and encourage proper hand washing procedures (Varthana, 2023). The hand-washing sessions provide an opportunity to spread hygiene messages, particularly the one that emphasises the importance of washing hands before eating and after using the bathroom. The sessions can be used to spread awareness of proper sanitation and the safety of drinking water. Allow enough time (ideally 10–12 minutes) before the midday meal so that each student and instructor have a convenient opportunity to wash their hands with soap.

Drinking water

There is the daily provision of sufficient water for hand washing and child-friendly, sustainable, safe drinking water. Additionally, water is needed for cooking and cleaning up after school. Water should be handled and stored safely at all times around the school.

Operation and maintenance

To make sure that the expected outcomes are realised and that the financial investments made in building these systems are not lost, all water, sanitation, and hand washing facilities must be clean, functioning, and well-maintained. Annual maintenance agreements may be made, which include regular maintenance of the facility as well as regular supply deliveries of consumables like soap, cleaners, brooms, brushes, and buckets. The provision for repair facilities and the identification of repair activities may be part of the annual maintenance contract. As an alternative, local arrangements can be made, such as the appointment of local cleaners and sweepers by the district or school who are given access to a consistent supply of consumables.

Behaviour change activities

Activities to influence behaviour through communication about water, sanitation, and hygiene should be a regular part of every child. The curriculum for textbooks may incorporate hygiene lessons, or they may be taught through supplemental readings, activity-based learning techniques, or even during the morning assembly sessions.

Female teachers must teach girls about menstrual hygiene management in a caring and encouraging way. They must also take measures to support and encourage girls during menstruation so that they do not miss class. This entails educating students about menstruation hygiene in the classroom and taking measures to guarantee that girls have a private space in which to wash and change clothing. In some circumstances, it will be necessary to utilise already-existing facilities; in other instances, a new facility will need to be built. Stockpiling extra sanitary products and clothing (such as school uniforms) for emergencies, as well as improving teacher training programmes, are further actions that can be performed to support females.

Enhanced capacities

In order to effectively organise, finance, manage, and monitor water, sanitation, and hygiene activities in schools, capacities at various levels within the sector must be enhanced. Teachers should know how to promote hygiene effectively, ensure that facilities are used and maintained equitably, and ensure that regular school-level monitoring of these factors occurs (Pathania, 2011). Additionally, the sector needs to be updated with fresh knowledge and new approaches to planning and implementing a programme for water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools.

Conclusion

Without the passionate support of the Indian people, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan would not have been a substantial undertaking. We still need to take action to protect our environment; the clean fight is not over. Students play a crucial role in the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, of which the government is aware. The government has focused separately on encouraging students to establish healthy habits because a healthy generation will help the country's progress. The students are competent communicators who can hold an audience's attention while discussing healthy practices. The students are the next generation; therefore, whether or not they are successful in persuading others to practise good hygiene, the future will undoubtedly have at least a healthy environment. If one has the bravery and genuine determination for their dreams, nothing is impossible, as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan demonstrates.

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