



## Mahatma Gandhi - The Champion of Swachh Bharat

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**Abstract:** Indians gained freedom under the leadership of Gandhiji, but his dream of a clean India is still unfulfilled. Mahatma Gandhi said "Sanitation is more important than independence. He made cleanliness and sanitation an integral part of the Gandhian way of living. Cleanliness is most important for physical well-being and a healthy environment. It has bearing on public and personal hygiene. But we are not bothered about cleanliness of public places Mahatma Gandhi said, ' I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet'".

**Key words:** Sanitation, independence, environment, swachhata

### Introduction:

*"When there is both inner and outer  
cleanliness, it approaches godliness" -  
M.K. Gandhi.*

Humans are driven by the basic instinct of living a happy and healthy life. Though it sounds to be a simple thing, it is hard to realize as it warrants the wholesomeness of both heart and mind. The idea of cleanliness or swachhata is prevalent in all the civilizations across all the times. It concerns not only physical and mental health of human being but also their spiritual development. Even the whole philosophy of the Mahatma Gandhi, father of the nation is based on cleanliness and related personal hygiene which says that spiritual and religious development of a man hinges upon the cleanliness, and also Mahatma said that 'Sanitation is more important than independence'.<sup>1</sup> An unclean environment is an insult to the creator. Everything that God has created is beautiful, and nature has in it the power to follow the norms of hygiene and sanitation. It is only man who makes his environment dirty and, very often and for reasons best known to himself, is happy to keep it that

way. Remember, this world is our temple and the first norm of cleanliness that we must follow is that of personal hygiene. This involves keeping one's body, clothes, belongings and home clean. This prevents diseases and prolongs life and its quality. It also makes the mind fresh and open to do better work. Cleanliness must also extend towards the neighborhood and the environment in general. For this one must develop clean social and civic habits. It is wrong to spit on the roads, urinate in public or throw litter anywhere you please. By doing such things we are defacing the property that belong to us - our nation, we are also spoiling this wonderful place that God has given us to live on our earth.

### Gandhian Ideology on Swachh Bharat:

Gandhiji was a visionary with rare foresight and insight. It spanned the environmental arena, as much as it did many other areas of vital importance to humanity and society. Gandhiji's entire conceptual framework regarding environment, also how to protect it and how not to damage it, is based on his opposition to the Western model of development.



It is a model based on increasing human greed and not on meeting human needs. It is the model responsible for widening the social, economic, political and ideological divides between the haves and have-nots of the world. It is the model responsible for ecological devastation and dehumanization of vast sections of human race for the sake of advancing mindless, selfish and heartless development initiated by and for the elite few. The means utilised for this kind of development have caused irreparable damage to the environment by exploitation of finite natural resources. The devastating results of such development were foreseen by Gandhiji much earlier than the environmental brigade of the 21st century. Gandhiji had professed these catastrophic consequences as early as in 1909, much before the Agenda 21 manifesto was published by the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Habitually, Gandhiji was a century ahead in his thinking and forecasting. Unfortunately, India also chose this model of development, and as of 2012, it is the fourth largest polluting country in the world.

Gandhiji's cardinal principles of peace and nonviolence are intrinsically interconnected with environmental well-being. Man is the most superior species on earth. Along with privileges, this stature has bestowed paramount responsibilities on him too. Above all, it has made him responsible and accountable for the welfare of all living beings and nature. But in his selfish greed for his progress alone, man has forsaken this sacred duty. Quite to the contrary, instead of being the protector and patron of all lesser beings and the environment, he has turned into their annihilator. This is not how nature

intended man to live and function. It wanted man to live in harmony with others, to coexist rather than to dominate. This simple but profound natural law was the basis of Gandhiji's environmental philosophy, which endorsed peaceful cohabitation, non-violence, and reverence for all life.

Cleanliness is Godliness is the mantra of Mahatma Gandhi . He demonstrated , propagated and insisted for individual and community cleanliness throughout his life. Gandhiji being chosen as an inspiration to Swachbharat, we have once again reaffirmed in the legacy of the Father of the Nation. But do we have to invoke him for simple acts of cleanliness only. He was a revolutionary par excellence in every way. Without the tempest that the revolutionary likes to be associated with every act of Gandhi was a rebellion, against unsustainable age old practices, yet his methods were gentle, persuasive and patience.

In 1946 Gandhiji visited Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) to bring peace in the communal strife district. He would walk from one village to another on his mission. An incident is recorded of one of his tours by his biographer Pyarelal .In the words of Pyarelal:

"The footpath was narrow so that the (Gandhiji's) party could walk on it only in single file. All of a sudden the column came to a dead stop. Gandhiji was removing the excreta from the footpath with the help of some dry leaves!

"The footpath had again been dirtied by some Muslim urchins.

' Why did you not let me do it? Why you put us to shame like this?' Manu asked. Gandhiji laughed: ' you little know the joy



it gives me to do such things.' Lots of village people had stood complacently by while Gandhiji was engaged in cleaning the footpath.....If the path is still dirty (tomorrow), I shall clean it myself. Cleaning up, in the widest sense of the term is my profession."

" Before setting out the next day, Manu remembered Gandhiji's directions and went back to inspect the path which Gandhiji had cleaned on the previous day. It was dirty as ever. She cleaned it herself. Other people seeing her do so joined and the whole thing was finished in less than fifteen minutes." As Pyarelal records, an object lesson was given to the villagers. They would see that scavenging is not derogatory.<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was once asked by a foreign correspondent in 1946 that if he were to be the Viceroy of India for one day, what he would do. He replied that he would spend the day cleaning the Augean stables of the scavengers near the Viceroy's House, and that he would do the same the next day and then on the next day.<sup>3</sup> Well that was what he had been doing all his life ; 'scavenging India' of all that was not right.

Gandhiji was not only cleaning latrines in South Africa and in India, he was cleansing humanity of prejudices, hatred and violence. His mission was spiritual cleansing of not only India but of the world. His was a message of peace, non-violence, love and brotherhood. When he spoke for the meek and the poor, he embraced the world; for the unprivileged in the world have no national boundaries. His fight for the oppressed was without bitterness, unlike the class war. In his war, the adversary was disarmed without a duel.

#### **Swachh bharat abhiyan mission:**

India that is Bharat is an ancient civilization. It is considered to be a pious nation, its people are very religious. India is consists of people of various faiths; Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, Jains etc, and they follow their faiths very devotedly. But it is a sad reality of our country that all the cleanliness and piousness is only confined to religious activities or kitchen. We Indians are not concerned about the filth all around us everywhere; anywhere one looks large mounds of dirt will be found. It's not in our behaviour to keep our surrounding clean and sanitized. At the most we keep our own houses clean and it is of no concern of ours to be careful about streets, lanes, parks or other public places. Even after 70 years of Independence, it is really shameful that Indians are famous for their unhygienic behaviour.

Recently, a present Government headed by Sri Narendranath Modi came into power and one of its main priorities are to make India clean. And for the same objective, the Government has launched a scheme in the name of "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan". The Government has associated 'Abhiyan' with the Father of the Nation- Mahatma Gandhi as he was a great champion of the cleanliness cause in the country and throughout his life was involved in activities related to sanitation and hygiene.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Objectives of swachh bharat abhiyan:**

The campaign of Swachh Bharat launched by the government of India is aimed to accomplish various goals and fulfill the vision and mission of "Clean India" by 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2019 which is 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the great



Mahatma Gandhi. It has been expected that the investment to cost would be over 62000 crore of Indian rupee (means US\$ of 9.7 billion). It has been declared by the government that this campaign is taken as "beyond politics" and "inspired by patriotism". Following are the some important objectives of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:

- To eradicate the system of open defecation in India.
- To convert the insanitary toilets into pour flush toilets.
- To remove the system of manual scavenging.
- To make people aware of healthy sanitation practices by bringing behavioural changes in people.
- To link people with the programmes of sanitation and public health in order to generate public awareness.
- To build up the urban local bodies strong in order to design, execute and operate all systems related to cleanliness.
- To completely start the scientific processing, disposals reuse and recycling the Municipal Solid Waste.
- To provide required environment for the private sectors to get participated in the Capital Expenditure for all the operations and maintenance costs related to the clean campaign.

As early as 4th February 1916, while addressing a gathering at the inaugural function of Banaras Hindu University, Gandhiji spoke about the importance of cleanliness and expressed his pain and anguish about the dirt and filth all around. He gave example of his visit to Vishwanath Temple and spoke about the dirty state of affairs in and around the temple. He said: "Is not this

great temple a reflection of our own character?" Sharing his pain he questioned whether the temple would be dirt and filth free after the British had left the country. Thus for him cleanliness was equally important as the freedom of the Nation.

Gandhiji was always of the view that everyone should first be the change he/she wishes to see in the world. Thus, whenever and wherever Gandhiji would get the opportunity he himself would start cleaning the places. Also, as part of constructive programmes and visits all over the country, apart from preparing people for mass struggle against the British, he also lectured them about the importance of cleanliness and proper sanitation.

Gandhiji always emphasize the need to educate villagers on good hygiene and sanitation. According to him, the true function of the Ashram was to educate people how they could avoid disease. Gandhiji and his volunteers would conduct a mass contact programme with the villagers; they would talk about the necessity of sanitation, about keeping their places clean, and about personal hygiene.

When the villagers near Gandhi's ashram refused to cover excreta with earth believing it to be a bhangi's work and sinful, Gandhi personally supervised the scavenging work in villages. To set an example, he, himself used to go to the villages with a bucket and a broom and would clean the places. All scavenging work in Gandhiji's ashram was done by its inmates. No dirt or filth could be found anywhere on the ashram ground. There were pits in which all rubbish was buried. In a separate manure pit, peelings of vegetables and left-over food were dumped. Waste water was used for gardening purposes.



Gandhiji regularly wrote about the importance of hygiene in his newspaper Harijan. Thus, the Father of our Nation fought not only against the bondages of the British rule but also against the bad practices our people regarding sanitation and hygiene. All his life he inspired and motivated people to maintain personal as well as public hygiene. Therefore, it is a great gesture and an apt tribute to the Mahatma that the Government has launched the "Swachh Bharat Campaign" on his birth day i. e. on 2nd of October.

Other programme of the cleanliness in India such as Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) was started in 1986 all over the country which had focused to construct the individual sanitary latrines for the personal use of the people living below the poverty line. It had focused to convert the dry latrines to the low cost sanitary latrines, to construct latrines especially for rural women with other facilities of hand pump, bathing room, sanitation, washing hands, etc. It was targeted that all the provided facilities should be properly maintained by the village Panchayats. Proper sanitation of the village such as drain systems, soakage pits, disposal of solid and liquid wastes, awareness of health education, awareness for social, personal, household and environmental sanitation etc.

Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) of cleanliness in India was started in 1999 by the Government of India in order to restructure the Rural Sanitation Programme. Nirmal Gram Puraskar was started in the month of June in 2003 as a sanitation programme to boost the Total Sanitation Campaign. It was an incentive scheme launched by the Government of India in 2003 to award

people for total sanitation coverage, maintaining clean environment as well as making villages open defecation-free villages by the Panchayats, Blocks and Districts.

#### **Swachh bharat campaign:**

The Abhiyan was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, 2014 at Rajghat, New Delhi with an aim to make India clean. Aim is to provide sanitation facilities to every family, including toilets, solid and liquid waste disposal systems, village cleanliness, and safe and adequate drinking water supply by 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019. It will be a befitting tribute to the Father of the Nation on his 150th birth anniversary. It is significant that the PM himself is taking very proactive role in making the campaign a success; at Rajghat he started the campaign by cleaning the street himself. However, it has been clearly declared that the campaign is not only the duty of the Government but each and every citizen of the country is equally responsible to keep the nation clean or *Swachh*.

The campaign of clean India movement is the biggest step taken ever as a cleanliness drive till date. On the day of launch of campaign around 3 million government employees including students from schools and colleges had participated in the event to make it popularize globally and make common public aware of it. This event was organized at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 2nd of October in 2014 in the presence of 1500 people. This event was flagged off by the Indian President, Pranab Mukherjee.

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, had nominated the name of nine famous personalities from business industries, sports and Bollywood to drive the clean



India campaign. He also had requested from all nine personalities to invite another nine personalities individually and requested to continue the chain nine people to take this campaign to every Indian living in any corner all around the country.

Narendra Modi has said that this campaign should be taken as the big challenge and must pass the request to invite other nine people individually (just like branching of tree) so that this vision of cleanliness may be completed till 2019 and may India become a clean country forever in the history. By getting inspired from this Indian campaign, the Indo Nepal Doctors Association has launched a campaign called "Swachh Bharat Nepal – Swasth Bharat Nepal Abhiyan" on 3rd of January in 2015. It was started from the Indo-Nepal Border Region, Sunauli – Belhiya (near birth place of Lord Buddha, holy city of Lumbini, Nepal).

Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA) was started in 2012 and then Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in 2014 on 2nd of October. However, all the sanitation and cleanliness programmes run by the Indian government earlier were not as effective as the current Swachh Bharat Abhiyan of 2014.

**Swachh bharat cess:** The Government of India has announced a Swachh Bharat Cess (SBC)<sup>5</sup> of 0.5% on all taxable services that is to be levied and collected with effect from 15 November 2015. The notification to this effect was released by the Government on 6 November 2015 vide Notification No 21/2015-Service Tax, covering Swachh Bharat Cess, under Chapter VI (Section 119) of the Finance Act 2015.

The SBC of 0.5% will be paid by all citizens who avail of any service that is taxable under service tax. What this means is that for every Rs 100 spent in availing any taxable service, Rs 0.50 will be paid to the government as SBC. This will apply to services like a/c restaurants, rail, road and air services, lottery services, insurance premiums and the like which means all those availing such services will now have to pay an extra 0.5%. However, the SBC will not be levied on services listed under the negative list or those that have been exempt from service tax.

Firstly, it must be clarified that while the SBC is referred to as a cess, it is actually a service tax. SBC is not applicable on the amount of service tax but on the value of taxable services. All service providers will now have to charge the SBC as a separate and clear amount, and this will in turn be registered in the service provider's accounts under a separate heading, and paid to the government under the specified accounting code as per notification from the government.

The existing service tax is 14% (raised recently from 12.5% to 14%) and the SBC will be charged additionally at 0.5%, therefore making the total service tax stand at 14.5%. The SBC will come into effect from 15 November 2015 and will only apply to cases where the invoice has been raised on or after 15 November 2015. For instance, if a railway ticket has been booked prior to 15 November, but the date of travel happens to be post 15 November, then no SBC will apply.

#### **Corporate India and Swachh Bharat**

Heeding to the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Corporate India is also enthusiastically taking steps



towards making the Abhiyan a success. Public and Private companies are appending in cleanliness activities under their compulsory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes which is a statutory requirement as per Companies Act, 2013. CSR is a mechanism through which companies invest in activities beneficial to society as a whole.

Only recently major corporate houses such as L&T, DLF, Vedanta, Bharti, TCS, Ambuja Cements, Toyota Kirloskar, Maruti, Tata Motors, Coca Cola, Dabur, Aditya Birla, Adani, Infosys, TVS and many others have earmarked budgets for Swachh Bharat projects. According to one estimate Rs 1000 Crore worth of various cleanliness projects are in the pipeline by corporate sector. These projects include building toilets in distant villages, running workshops on behavioural changes, waste management, and water hygiene and sanitation activities among other things.

In a bid to invite corporate funds for Swachh Bharat campaign, the government had recently decided that corporate contributions towards this scheme will now be counted as CSR spend. And to make it clearer later the Corporate Affairs Ministry also amended Schedule VII of Companies Act to specify that contributions to 'Swachh Bharat Kosh' would be an eligible CSR spends.

Therefore, not only government and private individuals but also the corporate sector is playing its role in making India totally clean.

**Better Governance- Swachh Bharat Programme beyond the Realm of Sanitation:** Swachh Bharat program can be the foundation to improve the functioning of overall systems and it should be seen beyond cleanliness and promoting sanitation programs.<sup>6</sup> Swachh

Bharat is possibly the noblest Government programme that has touched people from all walks of life.

However, it is important to look at Swachh Bharat beyond hygiene, waste management, and sanitation. The program can be the foundation to improve the functioning of overall systems and it should be seen beyond cleanliness and promoting sanitation programs. It is about doing things in a right way which can help the economy grow in the right direction. Keeping the spirit of Swachh Bharat intact, let's try extending Swachh Bharat beyond its realm of sanitation.

#### **Corruption Free State:**

Corruption has always been a major concern for our country. The Berlin-based corruption watchdog Transparency International (TI) has ranked India 76 out of 168 countries in its 2015 Corruption Perception Index. India has become a breeding ground for corruption. Starting from an individual to large institutions – all have engaged in some kind of corruption. It has become significantly important to find a solution to this cancer before it reaches incurability. While some have taken the initiative to fight against corruption, there is an immediate requirement of structural change for good governance and measures that may help the society overcome the terror of infectious surrounding. Though, Swachh Bharat is started showing initial and positive signs in cleaning up the air, there is still a long way to make India a "corruption free" nation. The responsibility of curbing fraud and cultivating India as a corruption free country does not lie only with Swachh Bharat or Government or any other independent body but also with us as it citizens.



**Cleaning of Books:** The passing of Bankruptcy Bill recently is a noteworthy effort by the Government. Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) report mentions that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has indicated on the impact of corporates' weak balance sheets on the financial system and a need closer monitoring. Bad assets and mounting NPAs need to be in control as the sector demands a "Swacch" and stable system.

**Cleanliness of Systems and Processes:**

Swachh Bharat is a highly ambitious programme. It is critical to focus on strengthening the processes and systems through continuous review and reforms. Initiation of AQR (Asset Quality Review) exercise by RBI aims at enhancing the transparency which will help in identifying the problem. This will help the regulator to take corrective measures and assure all the stakeholders on banks fundamentals and trustworthiness. Swachh Bharat is further comprehended with Digital India, comprising of various initiatives and each targeted to prepare India for becoming a knowledge economy and for bringing Good Governance to citizens through synchronized and coordinated engagement of the entire Government. To extend the discussions on cleanliness of systems through administrative reforms like:

Minimum Government Maximum governance through optimal exploitation of Technology-Data-Managed services (taking Government to the people)

'Reach the Unreached' through programs like JAM (Jan-Dhan-Yojana Aadhaar Mobility)

Early warning signs to make systems & processes intelligent proactively, self-monitoring & enhancing the effectiveness of the processes

Digital India sets the tone and is possibly the most comprehensive programmes to ensure continuous simplification of the processes and systems with enhanced transparency, accountability, and effectiveness towards constituting 'One Government'.

**Conclusion:**

The Honourable Prime Minister of India Sri. Narendra Modi rightly asserted that Swachh Bharat Abhiyan should be a combined effort of both the Government as well as the people. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan should not be mere - re branding exercise. There is no doubt about the fact that change begins at home. Every citizen of the country should take it upon himself to make this campaign a success rather than waiting for the government to do. Let us also hope that we can change the attitude of the people towards hygiene and be the change we want to see. We can say Swachh Bharat Abhiyan a nice welcome step the Clean and Green India till 2019 . As we all heard about the most famous proverb that *"cleanliness is next to godliness"*. We can say surely that clean Indian compain will really bring godliness all over the country in coming few years. If it is followed by the people of India in effective manner. So that cleanliness activities to warm welcome to godliness have been started but do not need to be ended. If he really want godliness and our lives forever. A healthy country and healthy society need its citizens to be healthy and clean in every walk of life.

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