

Impact of Swachh Bharat Mission on Religious Service Centers (Pandal): A Study of Ambaji Pandal

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Abstract

India is today transforming itself by taking basic task of cleanliness or 'swachhata' through Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) by allocating 90 billion dollars in alliance with international agencies to achieve the 6th SDG goal (SDG6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation)¹. The core objective of SBM is to clean up the streets, roads, villages, towns, cities, and eliminate open defecation through the construction of 90 million toilets at household and community level with the target achievable before 2nd October 2019, Mahatma Gandhi 150th birthday. To achieve ODF, primary target of building infrastructure is connected with the change of mindsets or bring attitudinal change in the people to shun open defecation. After spending 90 percent of finances and nearing the target dates, we attempted to study the impact of SBM on religious service center, established during "Bhadarvi Poonam" to provide services for pilgrims moving towards Ambaji shrine. The study would be conducted at a particular stretch on SG Highway, where the urban and rural people fall together, in the state of Gujarat. The case study will expose the success rate of rural and urban SBM campaign in inculcating behavioral and structural change.

KEYWORDS: Rural and Urban Swachh Bharat Mission, ODF, Ambaji Shrine, SDG, Attitudinal Change

Introduction

India with a mission to bridge the 60% toilet gap in rural India in 2014 has commenced an ambitious initiative with a vision to fulfill Mahatma Gandhi's Clean and healthy country through a notion of Swachh Bharat Mission to bring a social change among Indians, is now enjoying the applaud from round the world. As told by Gandhi, the root of all diseases among Indians is lack of a "sense of national or social sanitation"². In 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared a Swachhata mission known as (Swachh Bharat Mission) as a movement to bring the social responsibility to achieve social change in India. NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government has publicized the flagship program as a topmost priority and raised funds of 16,400 crores during 2015-17 by imposing a special cess. Through AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban transformation) mission (flag ship programme of NDA), Union government with equal

¹ SDG goals

² Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

support from states, has mobilized 1,00,000 crores in urban areas to achieve universal coverage of drinking water and sewerage connectivity. According to government claims “On Gandhi Jayanti this year, 2018, the SBM’s Gramin wing declared it has constructed 86.7 million Individual Household Latrines and raised sanitation access to 94% in rural areas; 5,07,369 villages are now ‘open defecation free’ and ‘urban toilet coverage’ is now 87% of the target, and nearly three-fourths of the wards in the country have door-to-door collection of municipal waste”. Government has declare 604 districts are ODF and 2,23,93,125 toilets have been constructed. On in this front, this is a huge advancement towards the Swachh mission,³ (source: ministry of drinking water and sanitation,GoI).

Apart from the above figures we had tried to figure out the actual impact of Swachhaas a social movement on a ‘RURBAN’⁴(rural and urban) section of people in Gujarat(Birth place of Mahatma Gandhi and NarendraModi). For this a survey has been undertaken on ‘Pandal’s sanitation and Hygiene’ (pandals are temporary religious service establishment).To brief on importance of religious aspect and role of pandals, in ancient religious texts there are many stories related to the origin of "Shakti Devi" and it's forms. "Shakti Peeth " was established in places where Sati (Goddess) body parts laid. The famous Shakti Peeth is believed to be Ambaji, in Gujarat. There is a lot of pride in "Bhadarvi Poonam" (Hindu calendar, falls in August-September).Ambaji'sBhadarviPoonam festival has been traditionally celebrated for many years. Unions of pedestrians from across Gujarat and adjoining States walks through their respective destinations to Ambaji. Many charitable people, trusts,organizations extend food, water, rest, and lodging facilities for these pedestrians. Thus festivities are facilitated with religious services.

Research Question: To identify whether the Pandals established at the time of Religious aspects ‘Provide Sanitation Facilities and maintain Hygiene’

Assumption: Swachh Mission has a social impact on all sections of People in India

Study Objective: to Identify the service level gaps in facilitating Sanitation and Hygiene at Pandals

Method: survey is conducted in identifying the facilities (sanitation and Hygiene) at all pandals located on SG highway. Method undertaken for this survey would be, observation of pandals, Personal interaction with the organizers, interaction with devotees, role of government in maintenance.

AmbajiPandal Survey

SI No	Pandal Name	Facilities	Toilet Provision	Garbage Collection	Permission From Government
1	Shree ValinathMitra	Rest place,	available	Door to	No(Voluntary)

³ministry of drinking water and sanitation,GoI

⁴Shyama Prasad MukherjiRurban Mission (SPMRM)

	Mandal:- (Nr. Ujala Circle, S.G. Hwy)	portable Water, food and portable mobile Toilet	(Mobile BioToilet)	door collection Vehicle	
2	Jay AmbeYuvak Mandal:-	Rest place, portable Water, Food	Not available (open defecation)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
3	Raja GurjarMitra Mandal:- (Sola Civil Hospital)	Rest place, portable Water, Food and portable mobile Toilet	available (Mobile BioToilet)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
4	Shree AmbajiPagpalaYatraSangh (Hanman Temple, Gurudwara, S.G. Hwy)	Rest place, portable Water, Food	Available (toilet available in temple)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
5	Jai AmbeMitra Mandal (Thaltej Gam, S.G. Hwy):-	Rest place, portable Water, Food and portable mobile Toilet	available (Mobile BioToilet)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
6	Jay AmbePagpala Service Centre/Camp (K. Verma Charitable Trust):-	Rest place, portable Water, Food and portable mobile Toilet	available (Mobile BioToilet)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
7	Jai AmbeSeva Camp	Rest place, portable Water, Food	Not available (open defecation)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
8	High Court Association Service Camp:- (Nr. Guj High Court, S.G. Hwy)	Rest place, portable Water, Food and portable mobile Toilet	available (Mobile BioToilet)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
9	Jay AmbeMitra Mandal (Gopal Group):-	Rest place, portable Water, Food	Not available (open defecation)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
10	Shree Balaji Temple Trust Camp	Rest place, portable Water, Food	Available (toilet available in temple)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)
11	Jay KhodiarSeva	Rest rooms	available	Door to	No(Voluntary)

	Kendra:- (The Biggest Pandal On S.G. Highway)	with AC, RO Water, food, Medical Facilities 24X7	(Mobile BioToilet)	door collection Vehicle	
12	Jay AmbeMitra Mandal (UvarsadChowkdi)	Rest place, portable Water, Food	Not available (open defecation)	Door to door collection Vehicle	No(Voluntary)

Survey Analysis

Before going detailed into the analysis part, choosing of SG Highway is an attempt to focus on the rural and urban spot, where in the RURBAN people prefer toroute along SG highway towards Ambaji. People coming from rural places and urban areas from south of Gujarat and big cities like Ahmedabad &Suratwould prefer this route. Total stretch of survey (SG highway)undertaken is 14 kilometers. Total pandals on thisstretch are 12 in number. Thedetails of the pandals and the services provided are mentioned the above table.

From the above survey we found some commonalities which, we would like to mention in a structured way.Providing of Voluntary serviceis very common in all the pandals, they were basically established for that purpose. All the pandals undertake the services, vizAC and non-AC resting facilities, food supplements, energy drinks for the pilgrims to finish the track, medical and sevasevices, etc. all the services are noncommercial. Interesting thing absorbedwith regard to permission for establishing pandal is, not a single service providers had approached government to establish the pandals along roadside, nor did government approached pandals about organizing those pandals. As part of municipal services those pandals were taken into account to provide civic services vis a vis collection of waste, establishing mobile bio toilet along the road, near the pandals and nearby establishments.The Door to Door collection vehicle are collecting garbage on daily basis, whereas in case of big pandals we evidenced service twice a day. Personal interaction with the pandalorganizers had given good feedback of the service provided by the local corporation in maintaining bio-toilets at bigpandals,but the regular collection of waste is visible at all the pandals placed on SG high way. The door to door collection vehicles owned by Municipal Corporation have been assigned to everypandal and the frequency depends on the capacity of the pandal, it handles.

The objective of the government in spending on urban SBM component by creating public and community toilets where place is constrain. Choosing scientific way of solid waste management and creating awareness wasan important component of the SB mission. For which 15% of the finance allocation to the ULB's will be spent on the advertisement component to undertake massive public awareness campaigns on sanitation to establishing its link to public health, hygiene and the environment through various means including - radio, social media, documentaries, plays, workshops, etc. and to draw a national media campaign and developing standard campaign tools for effective

awareness and communication on sanitation. In this front government become very successful in reaching out to the public. The study outcome has shown positive change in the public thinking towards ODF. 90 percent of pilgrims were using the toilets provided by pandals at the same time they were aware of the SBM campaign undertaken by GoI.

Conclusion

Form the above study we can conclude that infrastructural spending and massive awareness campaign by the government has worked well in integrating participation (public) and penetration (government). SBM Campaign has protruded into the minds of the masses and it is showing the results in the form of self-respect and dignity. My suggestion would emphasis on the mal-administration of government, where all pandals are serving without formal approval of the government. This will lessen the scope for the government to react at the time of security breach or disaster. Government should formally check with the hygiene of the food quality serving at pandals to avoid annoying situations. SBM campaign can be taken to next level by further strengthening infrastructure, imposing fines on the violators, compulsory education on SBM, etc

References

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