

A People's Movement

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There has, in the past, been a general distrust of Government schemes. The principal reason for this is that either the benefits don't reach the targeted or that the projected parameters are never achieved. However, there are schemes with a difference. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is arguably the most successful one.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

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Gandhiji had given a lot of emphasis on Swachhata. As we have completed nearly four years of the scheme, 39 per cent rural sanitation coverage has increased to a phenomenal 92 per cent. This was not an easy goal to achieve. This involved a behavioural change of the people. Many in the rural areas were initially reluctant.

But this 'people's movement' has today transformed into a 'women's movement' with rural women playing a leading role in the programme. We all knew that the dignity of women demanded the privacy of toilet. However, women of India are now stepping beyond their roles as mere beneficiaries of this programme to leaders of it today. For example, construction of toilets has always been a male bastion. In many States, however, thousands of rural women have been trained as masons and, with the assistance of Self-Help Groups, are now becoming the primary force in driving a State to be declared free from open defecation. Women becoming a bread earner through construction of toilets added to the family income.

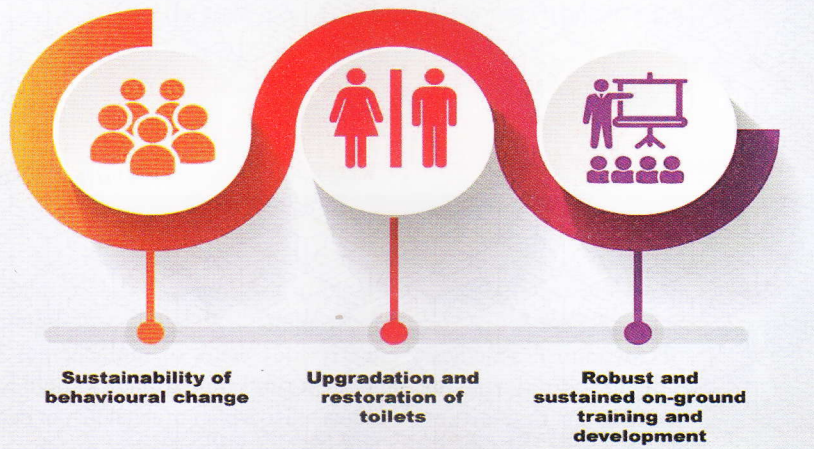
The hygiene in the utilization of the toilet is also a preventive

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WHAT IS ODF - Q?



healthcare scheme. Global experts believe that the SBM will have saved over three lakh lives in the country by the time we become 'open-defecation free' in 2019. Toilets in several parts of India have been named "Izzat Ghar". This is for the first time that the subject matter in the toilet construction campaign has taken central stage of the national agenda. It has become a subject matter of popular discussion. The Government of India has made available all the funds required for making this scheme a success. This scheme will go a long way in improving the quality of life of India's rural population, particularly women.

With rural roads, rural electrification, rural Awas Yojana, toilets and a cooking gas connection with foodgrain provided at a modest cost, the quality of life of India's rural poor will get a quantum jump. Additionally, when the Ayushman Bharat, which provides upto Rs.5 lakhs per family per year as hospitalisation expense, is fully implemented, this will change the quality of life of India's rural population.

Revision of Amount

The Central Government has

announced the decision to enhance the compensation paid to the Anganwadi workers and the Asha workers. The Anganwadi workers are the mainstay of the National Nutrition Mission. There are approximately 12.9 lakh Anganwadi workers and 11.6 lakh Anganwadi helpers in position. These benefits would be available to these 24.9 lakh Anganwadi workers and their families.

The remuneration of the Anganwadi workers has been raised from Rs.3000/- to Rs.4500/- per month; the mini Anganwadi workers from Rs.2250/- has been increased to Rs.3500/-. Remuneration of Anganwadi helpers has been increased from Rs.1500/- to Rs.2250/- per month.

These workers will also get an incentive of Rs.500/- per month and Rs.250/- per month respectively on the basis of the real time monitoring of performance. The Government had earlier made a significant increase in the cost norms for both pregnant and lactating mothers and for severely malnourished children.

This has been a long term demand of the Anganwadi workers and their helpers to give them a reasonable remuneration. Governments in the

past have always refrained from giving benefits to these 2.5 million workers ostensibly on revenue consideration. Notwithstanding the pressure on the Budget, the Government has given almost a 50 per cent hike in the first go to these workers. This will go a long way in addressing the grievance of these workers. □

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Success Story

Punjab to launch a bilingual ODF sustainability mobile App

Punjab is the first State to launch an ODF sustainability App under its 'My Village My Pride' campaign. The sustainability App is one of its kind, to cover all parameters related to sanitation as well as sustainability.

The app has the following features:

- It allows for online submission of complaints regarding open defecation which will help sustain the State's ODF status.
- Thereafter, the complainant can track progress of the complaint.
- Any community member who has been left out of the programme and does not have a toilet for some reason, can access a toilet application form through the App.
- Besides, the App has a social media corner and a sanitation gallery where all IEC materials and creatives can be viewed.

My Village, My Pride campaign also features various competitions between villages – ODF awareness, Morning Nigrani, cleanliness drive, women mohallas, soak pit awareness, and solid waste segregation. Prizes will be awarded for top performing groups at district, block and state levels.