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Ministry of Urban Development
Government of India



एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

“Improving Public Toilets in India”

Collective inputs from over 225,000+ Citizens in circle

“Swachh Bharat”

(Issues, Root Causes and Proposed Solutions)

December 10, 2014



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Public Toilets - Background

Public toilets in India have been a topic of debate for a long time now. The planning, the building and above all the ongoing maintenance have all been in question. The 225,000+ strong “Swachh Bharat” online community has come together to collectively identify the key issues, root causes and solutions for Improving the Public Toilets availability in India and the community expects that the various Government stakeholders at the central and state level in partnership with corporates, NGOs etc will work towards implementing the identified solutions.

Issues identified:

1. Not enough public toilets in towns and villages
2. Lack of public toilets on the highways as well
3. Maintenance of toilets is not a Government priority
4. Lack of skills and funds to maintain toilets
5. Most of the existing toilets are very old
6. Public toilets are very dirty and smelly
7. Drains of most of the public toilets are choked
8. Water supply to public toilets is erratic
9. Some public toilets have been built but still remain locked
10. Some toilets which are in good condition are paid
11. There are no lights in most public toilets and hence they cannot be used at night
12. Taps and commodes are broken

Root Causes Identified:

1. Sanitation is not given priority in our country
2. Public toilets are not very well planned
3. Number of people using public toilets is large and hence maintenance is tough
4. Government has been overlooking the requirement of skilled labour and funds to take care of the public toilets
5. Not enough cleaning staff present in public toilets
6. No accountability for the staff
7. Whatever staff is present, is lazy and inefficient
8. Workers entrusted with maintaining these toilets are not well paid
9. Lack of modern tools and machines to help the workers with cleaning



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10. A lot of fancy public toilets are built with little understanding of maintenance/municipal clearances and therefore end up being unusable later.
Example: Delhi Commonwealth Games
11. Taps/commodes which break are never reported by the employees due to the fear of having to work extra
12. Clearances required to change damaged/broken items, which takes long time
13. Drains of the toilets are not properly connected with the main drain of the area
14. Most of the people who use public toilets lack civic sense

Solutions Identified:

1. A public toilet should be constructed after every kilometre in towns and villages
2. On the highways, public toilets should be built after every 5-10 kms
3. Government should make the building and maintenance of public toilets one of their top priorities
4. The municipal corporations should be made responsible for the upkeep of the public toilets
5. Special funds should be allocated to the Municipal Corporations for this initiative
6. Staff should be given special training to keep the toilets clean
7. Staff should be made accountable for their work
8. Modern cleaning equipment should be purchased
9. Choked drains are the primary reason for the filthiness of the public toilets; de-silting the drains everyday should be made part of the maintenance process
10. Automatic room fresheners should be installed in all public toilets
11. Continuous water supply should be ensured to all public toilets
12. Bright lighting should be ensured in all public toilets
13. Solar panels should be installed for lighting wherever possible
14. All broken taps and commodes should be immediately replaced
15. Outsourcing the maintenance to private contractors could be another option to increase accountability
16. Installing the new age bio-degradable toilets could also ease out the situation
17. Option of corporates building and maintaining public toilets (in their neighbourhood/area) should be explored and tied up with CSR initiatives
18. Public awareness campaigns on the effective use and upkeep of toilets should be organized across India
19. NGOs should be given easy clearances to build and operate public toilets



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20. Make it mandatory for every petrol pump to build and maintain a toilet for the general public

Public Toilets – A few citizen posts and comments:

1. Agree that if cleaning staff manning these toilets are well paid and have resources to regularly clean it, then it will ensure good upkeep. Nominal fees can be charged for use of such facilities – **Jaishankar**
2. Public toilets should be maintained by private agencies/NGOs working in this area. The pay and use charges collected are not enough to meet the costs of operation and maintenance and so these toilets are poorly maintained. As a result, areas for generating revenue need to be explored. Also, each O&M agency should be given a minimum no of toilets in an area to make break-even – **Rajiv Sharma**
3. People from public should be made volunteers for the same and a perfect mechanism should be provided to all, so that the proper functioning can be administered. There should be a systematic communication between all the volunteers within 5 Km of circle so that any flaws or any kind of failure to administer toilet cleaning can be taken care of... All In All! There should be no compromise with the cleanliness – **Sharad Chauhan**
4. On National highway there are petrol pumps at every 1 or 2 km interval maintained by private parties under different oil companies. Make it mandatory for all petrol pump owners to maintain at least two toilets in their area and one toilet with full washroom facilities. Give tax rebates to them for maintaining the toilets and make clause of cancellation of petrol pump license in case of failure of proper maintenance. Make oil companies inspectors responsible for the proper upkeep of toilets maintained by petrol pumps owner – **Rajeev Kumar**
5. There are no standards set for cleanliness. While handing over toilets to private maintenance, please set a standard. Let it be nation-wide standard and known to all users who are paying of this service. There has to be inspection of these services to meet the level of cleanliness – **HN Prabhu**
6. Adequate number of public toilets area wise and its maintenance should be the responsibility of the corporator who can delegate the same to the department people and monitor the same periodically. The MLA should also take a surprise round for monitoring the public toilets. However proper planning for construction of new toilets is very much required – **Sanjay Diwate**
7. Local Body should issue guidelines for cleanliness and sanitation at Public Toilets, Monitoring of the Public Toilets should be done and report should be sent to Zonal Officer and Corporator, Local Committee should be made for each public toilet,



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there should be a personnel deputed who is responsible for each Public Toilet, SHG of the area can be given this responsibility, punishment and award policy must be there for city level public toilets – **Jayant Pathak**

8. Public toilets are mostly stinky. Condition of the paid toilets also grim, the caretaker only in a hurry to collect money from the public, they hardly look in to the cleanliness. Public to be made aware of keeping the public toilet clean by a campaign. Toilet caretakers are to be trained and they to instruct people using toilets in a clean way before they enter into the toilet. Most of the places, it's a common scene that, though there are toilets, public use surrounding open places thereby causing high level dirt as well as public nuisance. They are to be fined strictly. Unless NGO's take serious steps, it would be highly impossible to educate public, who use public toilets – **P. Vishvambharan**
9. There is no harm if money is charged / usage for the public toilet, however, the maintenance must be supervised by trained staff and sufficient equipment and consumables must be provided – **Rajesh Makharia**
10. Paste notices for awareness in Hindi, local and English languages towards cleanliness everywhere; appoint a cleaner for stretch 8 hour basis on shift duty to clean and make the time sheet. Provide cleansing toiletries and awareness to respect the public properties and loyalty award for staff towards duty. regular maintenance of the wall, door, tap, flushes and tiles also gives an impact on users to handle properly – **Lata Thomas**
11. The equipment given to Janitorial Staff (Cleaners) at present throughout the country is totally third rate in quality, antiquated in design. Besides, it is important to provide "showels" ghamelas' "trolleys" and last but not the least important "gloves". May be some music could be provided when the J-Staffers do the cleaning jobs. Organizations like 'Sulabh Sauchalaya' "Namma Bengalure, Nirmala Bengaluru" should come forward to take this further and make it an all-India mission – **V.L.N Balramdas**