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SANITATION AND RURAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE:- SOME ISSUES

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INTRODUCTION

A large number of Indian population lives in the rural areas and is mainly engaged in agriculture. They all belong to a weaker section of the human society. There is a definite trend of rural population migrating to the urban areas due to lack of employment opportunities, low earnings, and insufficient means of transport and in sanitary living conditions. Sanitation system has not been taken seriously in India and especially in rural area since independence. What we have taken into account is digesting and diet system but concept of good sanitation is far beyond the imagination in our human society. People in rural area build a big pucca house with all facilities, but fail in building toilet due to the social taboos. Over 80 percent of people in rural area lag behind sanitation facilities in India. V.S Naupal in his book "An Area of Darkness" has repeatedly referred to the Indian women and men defecating in open air generally and on the roadside flank specially. After such a long time of independence the situation is not quite clear that early in the morning or late dusk vehicle travelers and pedestrians have to hide their faces to avoid seeing such bizarre scenes while passing along the road.

CONCEPT OF SANITATION

Emphasizing the relative importance, father of the nation **Mahatma Gandhi had once said, "Sanitation is more important than Independence."** So far, India has done a commendable job in improving the sanitation facilities and providing clean drinking water to all. People in rural area usually don't keep the toilet facility at home since the house is believed to be God's place and deny discharging any excreta at such a dwelling place of God. In fact such religious minded people of our rural area live highly in bondage. So, they go out in a barren field, farm or in jungle for their excreta. Women usually cover their head with their saree in pretext of respecting elders of their family, have to go to the field or barren place away from the sight of their elders for the same function. Any person who has such toilet facilities in his house is considered to be impure and such an orthodox mentality has taken away the spirit of sanitation system from rural villages.

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Lack of education has caused the rural persons to have a low mentality in having such facilities. Moving with open sandals (chappals) in the residential area of the house is believed to be impure. The concept of sanitation which is basically one of the basic components of the health and hygiene, such a concern is not fully accepted by the large number of the villagers. Hence, in order to sensitize the villagers, the Central and the State government of India and Gujarat have taken a few initiatives to make social awareness among them.

EFFECT ON HEALTH AND OTHER SOCIAL EFFECT

According to a reliable data, in the world, nearly 240 crores of people live under highly unsanitary situation. This has led to their unhygienic behaviours and to face disease like diarrhea and other infectious diseases. This has caused a high infant mortality and women connected diseases in rural regions. Hence, it is very essential to identify the needs and raise awareness in the villages on sanitation and hygiene in collaboration with all feasible social partners and allies. Malaria, diarrhea and typhoid have become common sicknesses in the villages and they cause ill health among the youngsters. The multi dimensional of poverty, lack of income, lack of assets, lack of power and legal rights, and also lack of proper education have caused high level of health problems in rural area where quality of life is like the slum. Due to lack of hospitals and government primary health centers, the people of the rural area cannot get essential and timely care from the doctors. Such a thing cause high mortality rate in a village.

In place of latrine, going out for discharging the waste of body to outfield have their own risk. Women usually go early in the morning or after evening time when sun light is vogue to hide their identity but incidence of eve teasing and rape happen in such time.

The issues in sanitation, especially in rural areas, start with lack of availability of clean and sufficient water, improper disposal of human and other waste, lack of awareness regarding public health, age old habits like going for latrine in open area, no proper hand washing after latrine etc.

The women are most affected by the problem of lack of proper sanitation. The high ratio of girls drop out in schools was due to lack of toilet facility. Even today, the government tries its best to address this issue properly. One of the major factors in gang rape is – going for latrine in open area, especially the girls and women are easily victimized at that time.

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AWARNESS PROGRAMME

The Central Rural Sanitation Program of the Indian Government began in 1986. It has now evolved into Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) which operates in various districts of States and Union Territories of India. With the help of local NGOs, the Central and State Government made an attempt with proper awareness campaigns to build proper toilets as a way to have a clean India. The local village panchayats were encouraged to implement this program by providing subsidies to the poor villagers in order to build proper toilets in their homes. Keeping this thrust, the local village authorities were motivated to execute and monitor the projects with a view of achieving 100% result in their area. With the help of advertisements in newspapers and other social media an attempt was made to make the people aware in this direction. In this regard, the Prime Minister of India has stepped forward to make a demonstration to encourage people to have proper sanitation in their homes. Such advertisement alone has made a huge impression among the masses.

A local play and social awareness programs like DAYRO, BHAVAI which are heartily connected with the people in rural area should work in favour of cleanliness and sanitation. Various schemes launched by the government for rural people should be introduced properly among them. But, unfortunately the government machinery system itself has failed to provide proper amount to build such toilets due to the lack of enthusiasm of the government employees and associated corruption practices, took away the spirit of such a noble project. At the same time, one such project which is run by Bindeshwar Pathak with the name of Sulabh organization in India has gained an international recognition due to their developmental methodology. The 'Latrine made easy' or 'Pour flush Latrine' system, popularly known of Sulabh Sauchalay, is indeed a popular adjust and aide to hygienic development in most of the area in India. Though it has not covered the entire rural India, still the work is worth praising and a milestone to us.

CONCLUSION:

Sanitation is an important issue in rural India and it needs to be handled seriously. People need to be educated to understand the reality of village and an awareness program via media and print media should be made effective. The recent program of our Prime Minister – "Swachh Bharat, Swasth Bharat" is very much in this direction and enough funds must be provided to fulfill such ambitions to the enthusiastic workers. This needs attention in the developmental model of Make-in-India!

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