

SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL IMPACT OF SWACHH BHARAT MISSION (GRAMEEN) ON MISING TRIBE PEOPLE OF DHEMAJI DISTRICT, ASSAM

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Abstract

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Socio behavioral impact;
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For every human being potable drinking water, sanitation and healthy hygiene practices are important to sustain healthy life. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Grameen) came into existence in 2014 to ensure that each and every citizen of India should get the access to these basic necessities. This paper focuses on the socio-behavioral impact created by this nationwide campaign on the Mising tribe people living in Dhemaji district of Assam. A total sample of 50 households from all the 5 blocks was selected randomly for the study from the district. One respondent was selected from each household for the study. This study employed face to face interview as a method and questionnaire a tool of data collection. The statistical data was analyzed and represented by tables. Study finding shows that 34 % of total respondents were not aware of SBM-G and 35 % of the total 'Below Poverty Line' respondents have not got a toilet from SBM-G. 52 % of total respondents think that the toilets

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provided by SBM-G have drawbacks. It was also observed that 74 % of the total respondents do not wash their hands with soap at critical times such as before taking meal and after using toilet. The quality of toilet construction is not satisfactory to more than half of the total respondents. Moreover, even after the completion of 4 years of launching SBM-G, still people defecate in the open in most of the villages. The study findings recommend that SBM-G should not limit itself to building toilets only. Rather it should capitalize on the IEC (Information, Education, Communication) part more and effectively too.

1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that a clean nation is a healthy nation. Cleanliness and sanitation for India has been a story of gradual progress due to the country's large geographical coverage of 3.2 million square kilometers. While policy measures can play a key role in ensuring universal sanitation, nothing can replicate the impact of a behavioural change in the citizens of the country. In cognizance of this fact and to initiate a nation-wide movement to build a Clean India as envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi, the Swachh Bharat Mission was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi on October 2, 2014. The core objective of the Mission is to "accelerate universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation". Run by the Government of India, the mission aims to achieve an "open-defecation free" (ODF) India by 2 October 2019, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, by constructing 90 million toilets in rural India at a projected cost of ₹1.96 lakh crore. The government has constructed 86 million toilets since 2014, reducing the number of persons who openly defecate from 550 million to fewer than 150 million in 2018. Many people continue to not use toilets despite having them. The campaign has been criticized for using coercive approaches to force people to use toilets.

It has been more than 4 years since the launching of Swachh Bharat Mission- Grameen throughout the country. 25 states (including Assam) out of 29 have been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) till the completion of the research. The government is going to declare the country as ODF in 2nd October this year. Still the picture is not as complete as shown on the official website and papers. Toilets are being constructed on daily basis throughout the country including Assam. But constructing toilet was not the sole objective of this mission when it had been started in 2014. How important sanitation is to their health, how contaminated drinking water and unhygienic practices affect their lives: awareness on these issues was also included in the objective part. But the present scenario is that according to the Base Line Survey, 2012 (BLS), all are getting sanitary toilets but the usage of the same is not 100 %. The awareness regarding usage of toilets and hygienic practices are still very poor in the rural areas.

Dhemaji is one of the remote districts of Assam. It is located at the north bank of the river Brahmaputra which flows across the state. This district has the highest population of Mising tribe people in Assam. Majority of their population live in the rural areas and it is seen that most of them live in a very unhygienic environment. They are comparatively less aware about the issues like sanitation and hygiene. Many households own no toilet and defecate in the paddy fields or in *jungles*. This research was conducted to study the reach of Swachh Bharat Mission to those regions and the impact of it on the Mising people. A majority of people think that it is not convenient to use a toilet; so they go to *jungle* like their ancestors used to go. Some of them use *kutchha* toilet and have no idea how harmful this practice could be.

In the research paper “**Status of sanitation and hygiene practices in the context of "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" in two districts of India**” (2016), the authors **Pushpanjali Swain, SrithiPathela** aimed to study (1) the current status of sanitation and hygiene practices of the individuals; (2) The level of awareness of the individuals about sanitation, hygiene and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and; (3) the extent of use of sanitary toilets by the individual at household level, in the context of the districts Ghaziabad and Jabalpur. A sample size of 190 households was selected for the study. As observed in this study, 76% of the total respondents were not aware about the national program “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” and 56% were not aware about the importance of good sanitary conditions. When the hand washing practices were assessed, it was

found that 8% of the total people do not wash their hands after defecation and 11% of the respondents never wash their hands before having their meals. Though 61% of respondents said that they were washing their hands on a regular basis, but the investigators observed that only 51% of them were having their hands visibly clean. Merely 29% of the respondents were using soap or antiseptic liquid while the remaining of them were using other conventional materials such as mud (32%) and ash (28%). 11% of the respondents were washing their hands with water only. The study results shows that sanitation problems were not just due to the lack of facilities or funding, but also due to the behavior pattern of the individual towards the hygienic practices. As the conclusion of the study suggests, for effective implementation of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, it is important to bring out the immediate need of awareness in the community. So that community can be made a part of this program through community participation.

In the research paper **“Study to access knowledge, perception and practices regarding Swachh Bharat Abhiyan among rural people of Nalgonda district in Telangana state” (2018)**, the authors **KishoreYadav J., Navya K. Naidu, Sreeharshika D., Harikrishna B., Malhotra V**, try to understand the perception and knowledge of rural people of 6 villages towards Swachh Bharat Mission. A sample size of 328 was selected randomly for the study. The researchers found that 204 (62.2%) out of 328 participants have heard about SBA and 169 (82.84%) of them were aware about objectives of SBM. 85.78% felt that SBA is a useful programme for the community. Majority (77.45%) of the participants felt that people must actively participate in SBA activities. 22.05% of the subjects felt that SBA is propagated for political benefits. Only 25.98% of the subjects have participated in SBA activities. 59.31% of the participants would like to motivate people to participate in SBM activities. 26.52% of the subjects prefer open field defecation and 34.75% of the subjects were disposing solid waste in community bins. The study stated that 69.81% of the subjects were using soap and water for hand washing after defecation. The findings reflect the positive perception of the community towards SBM. The conclusion of the paper states that the present study found that majority of the subjects were aware of SBM and its objectives and most of them were having positive attitude and perception towards SBM; though most of the people were having positive perception only 25.98% have participated in SBA activities.

2. Research Method

This research adopted the quantitative explanatory design as the main methodology. This study was conducted in Dhemaji district of Upper Assam where Mising tribe population is the highest in case of Assam. The study targeted population of all the ages' i.e. from school students to senior citizens lives in the Mising villages of Dhemaji. The sample of this study was selected from the larger population of the study, which included both men and women. The sample was obtained through simple random sampling. From each development blocks, 10 Mising households were selected randomly and thus a total of 50 households from 5 blocks were selected. Then one respondent was selected from each household for the study.

Questionnaire and face to face interview, both were used as tools of data collection. All the 50 respondents were approached by the researcher himself and took responses of all the 20 questions along with other requisite informations regarding the research topic. During the interviews, the researcher tried to know the attitude and perception of the respondents towards the campaign. Sample size for this study is 50 participants, with 68% male and 32% female representation. Every individual participating in the study was explained the purpose of the study in Assamese (the local language).

3. Results and Analysis

3.1: Demographic and economic characteristics of respondents

3.1.1: Respondents' Distribution by sex

50 respondents participated in this study, with 34 (68 %) male and 16 (32%) female respondents.

Table 3.1.1: Respondent's distribution by sex (N=50)

SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MALE	34	68%
FEMALE	16	32%
TOTAL	50	100%

SOURCE: RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1.2: Respondents' distribution by age

Among the 50 respondents, 22 respondents were of the age below 30 and the rest 28 respondents were of the age above 30.

Table 3.1.2: Respondent's distribution by age (N=50)

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
BELOW 30	22	44%
ABOVE 30	28	56%
TOTAL	50	100%

SOURCE: RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1.3: Respondents' distribution by economic condition

Among the 50 respondents, 46 households fall Below the Poverty Line (BPL) and the rest 4 households fall above the Poverty Line (APL).

Table 3.1.3: Respondent's distribution by economic condition (N=50)

Economic condition	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
BPL	46	92%
APL	4	8%
TOTAL	50	100%

SOURCE: RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.2: Respondents' awareness on Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)

The respondents were asked if they have ever heard the term SBM (G) and if yes, then what is it. Most of the answers were like Swachh Bharat Mission means cleanliness, some said it is PM Narendra Modi's mission and some respondents answered that it is about toilet while many of them have not heard the name at all. To be precise, 66% of the respondents have heard the name SBM (G) and the rest 34% have not heard the name at all. The female respondents were more likely to be unaware of the campaign as compared to the male respondents. Out of 34 male respondents 27 respondents were aware of the campaign while out of 16 female respondents only 6 respondents were aware of SBM (G). According to the study, the age factor does not matter much in case of awareness on SBM. Out of 22 below 30 years of age respondents, 14 were aware of it while out of 28 above 30 years of age respondents, 19 respondents were aware of it.

3.3: Socio-behavioral impact of SBM (G) on the respondents

This question was addressing the main objective of the study, which was to examine the socio behavioral impact of SBM on the lives of the respondents. It has been nearly 5 years since the launch of SBM, therefore the impact of this campaign should be clearly visible socially on the present date. When asked about the sanitary condition of the village, 84 % of the respondents think that SBM is making their villages cleaner. The respondents were asked if they had noticed any kind of behavior change among the rural people, in reply 62 % of the respondents answered positively. When the respondents were asked about the impact of SBM, 44 % said that it created a positive impact on the lives of people. The respondents were asked if people still went out to defecate in the open fields or jungles, it was found that 90% of the respondents think that a portion of people in the villages still defecate in the open. The respondent's thinking are as elaborated by the Table 3.3.4.

Table 3.3.4: Socio behavioral impact of SBM (G) on the respondents

QUESTIONS	FREQUENCY (f)	YES	NO	NO IDEA	TOTAL
	PERCENTAGE (%)				

1. Have you ever heard about SBM (G)?	f	33	17		50
	%	66	34		100
2. Do you have sanitary latrine in your house?	f	36	14		50
	%	72	28		100
3. Did you have sanitary toilet before launching of SBM (G)?	f	8	42		50
	%	16	84		100
4. Does the toilet got from govt. fulfil your need?	f	27	9	14	50
	%	54	18	28	100
5. Does the toilet provided by govt. have any drawback?	f	26	18	6	50
	%	52	36	12	100
6. Does anyone go out to defecate in the open?	f	45	2	3	50
	%	90	4	6	100
7. Are hygienic conditions of public institutions such as school, anganwadicenters, health centers in your village improving?	f	36	7	7	50
	%	72	14	14	100
8. Do you keep separate dustbins at home for garbage segregation?	f	2	48		50
	%	4	96		100
9. Do you wash your hands with soap in the three critical times daily?	f	13	37		50
	%	26	74		100
10. Do you have any water logging issue at your hom campus?	f	27	22	1	50
	%	54	44	2	100
11. Have you ever gone through any IEC materials such as hoardings, posters regarding SBM?	f	30	16	4	50
	%	60	32	8	100
12. Have you heard of any awareness	f	23	23	4	50

programme on SBM held in your village or district?	%	46	46	8	100
13. Have the number of diseases such as Diarrhea, Jaundice etc. Been decreased in your family after the launching of SBM?	f	27	22	1	50
	%	54	44	2	100
14. Have you noticed any kind of behaviour change of the villagers in case of sanitation and hygiene after the launching of SBM?	f	31	7	12	50
	%	62	14	24	100
15. Is SBM making your village/district cleaner?	f	42	5	3	50
	%	84	10	6	100
16. Do you think SBM is creating any positive impact in the lives of people?	f	22	9	19	50
	%	44	18	38	100

Source: Research Findings

Findings:

The respondents were asked various questions related to Swachh Bharat Mission (Gameen) and its impact on the people's lives. As the researcher himself went to the field to ask the questions and tried to know the people's attitude towards SBM, therefore it helped him to come to a definite and clear conclusion.

The researcher found that 66 % of the respondents had heard the term Swachh Bharat Mission while the rest 34% did not have any idea what this term means. This means that there are still many areas where the lights of this campaign have not fallen yet. Worth mentioning that, majority of the respondents know this campaign as a "Jhaadoo (broom) sweeping mission" which is only partially truth. Actually, cleaning the surrounding is not the primary goal of this mission, but to make the people to use a sanitary toilet is. Majority (26%) of the respondents came to know about SBM for the first time through government employees or social workers. Only 16% of the respondents came to know it through TV advertisements or newspapers. 24% of the respondents came to know it by other means of communication. Though Assam had been

declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) just before this survey, the researcher found that 28% of the respondents still have no sanitary latrine which is a serious issue. It was seen that 84% of the respondents did not have sanitary toilet before launching of SBM, which shows the success of this campaign in providing toilets. Most of them used *kutcha* toilet before it. 54% respondents think that the SBM toilet fulfills their need while 28% have no idea about it. Usually majority of the beneficiaries have many complaints on the construction of SBM toilet. According to this survey, more than half (52%) of the respondents said that the SBM toilets have a few drawbacks such as weak door, toilet size, pit construction etc. 36% do not find any drawback and the rest 12% have no idea about this issue. Majority (44%) of the respondents think that 80-100% of the villagers of their respective villages have access to sanitary toilet. 26% think that 60-80 % of the villagers have access to sanitary toilet while only 2% think that 20-40% villagers use sanitary toilet. When the researcher asked the respondents about the use of *kutcha* toilet in the villages, it was found that 80% respondents think that the use of the same is very less (20-40%). Only 2% of the respondents think that the use of *kutcha* toilet is between 80-100%. 90% respondents think that even after the declaration of ODF, people go out to open for defecation. According to 72% of the respondents, the hygienic condition of the public institutions like school, anganwadi, health centers has improved after the launch of SBM while 14% thinks that it has not. When asked about garbage segregation at home, it was seen that only 4% respondents keep separate dustbins at home while the rest 96% do not keep the same. The researcher found that the rural people do not even keep a single dustbin at their place which is a matter of serious concern. The respondents were asked about their hand washing habits at various critical times. By the term 'critical times', the researcher meant the particular times before or after doing some sort of activities such as taking meal, using toilet, breast feeding etc. It was found that 74% respondents do not wash their hands with soap at these critical times. Some of them use sand or ash as the replacement of soap. Most of the respondents wash their hands with water only before taking meal which can be dangerous. 54% respondents have water logging issues at their homes as there is a common habit of the missing people of pouring the dirty water below their '*changghar*' which creates a very unhygienic condition around a house. The rest 44% do not have that issue. It's been more than 5 years since SBM started, though 40% respondents have not seen any SBM hoardings or posters yet which questions the quality of IEC activities done by the concerned department. When asked about their awareness on SBM meetings in their respective villages or

GP, the result was found 50-50%. Only 38% respondents think that after the launch of SBM, the diseases such as diarrhea, jaundice etc. are getting less. When they were asked about the behavior change of the villagers after the launch of SBM, it was found that 62% respondents do think that behavior change is happening in the society while the 14% think in a negative way. During the survey the researcher found that 84% of the respondents think that the Dhemaji district has become cleaner after the campaign had been launched. 44% think that SBM is creating a positive impact in the lives of people while 18% think in a negative way. At last, when the respondents were asked to give rating for SBM out of 5 stars, highest 52% gave 3 stars, 4% gave 1 star and only 8% respondents gave the campaign 5 stars, which show that people are not that happy with the nationwide campaign. Moreover it was found that, among the BPL respondents only 65% respondents got toilet from the government while rest 35% did not get toilet from SBM.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that though Swachh Bharat Mission- Gramin is providing sanitary latrines to the poor and want to make the country an open defecation free country, they are not fully successful in making the rural mising people aware about the sanitation and hygiene issues. Although having a toilet many mising people (especially aged ones) do not want to use it due to lack of knowledge and awareness. The rural people are not aware of the benefits of hand washing with soap; they do not know about the safe handling of drinking water or using dustbins. On the other hand majority of the people have issues with the construction of the toilet. They are totally not satisfied with the quality of construction. From the findings we could see that after the launch of SBM, the use of kutchha toilet among the mising people had been reduced. But it was seen that a part of mising people still defecate in the open. From the rating question, we come to the conclusion that majority of the mising people are not satisfied with this government's campaign.

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