

Addressing the Issues of Sanitation in Rural Area of Tripura Through Swachha Bharat Mission: A Study in Bamutia Block of West Tripura District of Tripura

Sujit Ghosh

Research Scholar, Jaipur National University

Abstract

This study evaluates the impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on sanitation in Bamautia Block of West Tripura, focusing on challenges and barriers to effective implementation. Launched in 2014, SBM aimed to eliminate open defecation and improve cleanliness nationwide, but rural areas, particularly in the North-East, face persistent sanitation issues. This research assesses the availability of sanitation facilities, the adoption of SBM practices, and the challenges faced by rural households in four selected Panchayats. Findings reveal that while 75% of households have access to toilets constructed under SBM, many still practice open defecation, primarily due to poor maintenance, water scarcity, and lack of hygiene awareness. Despite high awareness of SBM, only 40% of respondents understood key hygiene practices such as hand washing. Barriers to full adoption include financial constraints and insufficient training on toilet upkeep. The study suggests enhancing awareness campaigns, providing financial support for maintenance, empowering local Panchayats, and integrating water supply with SBM efforts. These measures are crucial for overcoming the existing challenges and ensuring the long-term success of SBM, ultimately leading to improved sanitation and health outcomes in rural Tripura.

Introduction

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), launched in 2014, has aimed to improve sanitation across India, with a special focus on eradicating open defecation and promoting cleanliness and hygiene. However, the rural areas, especially in North-Eastern states like Tripura, continue to face significant challenges in implementing SBM effectively. This paper focuses on assessing the impact of SBM on sanitation issues in Bamautia block of West Tripura District. The study aims to identify the level of sanitation, the implementation of SBM, and the challenges faced in the adoption of sanitation practices in four selected Panchayats of Bamautia.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the government's efforts through SBM, rural areas in Tripura still face persistent sanitation issues, such as inadequate toilet facilities, open defecation, and poor waste management. While the SBM has succeeded in constructing toilets, the challenges in maintaining hygiene and ensuring full adoption of SBM practices persist. This study investigates how SBM has impacted sanitation practices in the rural areas of Bamautia block, West Tripura, and explores the barriers to achieving a "clean India."

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

- To assess the sanitation facilities available in Bamautia block of West Tripura.
- To examine the impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission on sanitation practices in the four selected Panchayats of Bamautia.
- To identify the challenges faced by rural households in adopting SBM interventions.
- To provide recommendations for improving sanitation and the effectiveness of SBM in the region.

Review of Literature

Several studies have examined sanitation issues in rural India, particularly in the context of SBM. According to a report by the Ministry of Rural Development (2018), SBM has been successful in increasing toilet coverage in rural India, but it faces challenges in maintenance, awareness, and usage, especially in remote areas. In the North-East region, including Tripura, studies have highlighted the lack of access to proper sanitation facilities due to geographical constraints, cultural practices, and inadequate infrastructure (Chakraborty, 2019).

In Tripura, the government has made significant efforts to improve sanitation, but rural areas still lag behind urban regions in terms of toilet construction, cleanliness, and waste management. The success of SBM has been mixed, with some areas seeing significant improvements, while others still grapple with issues like improper disposal of waste and limited awareness of hygiene practices (Sen, 2020).

Study Area

Bamautia block is situated in the central part of West Tripura and consists of both urban and rural areas, with a predominantly agricultural population. These Panchayats have faced challenges in terms of sanitation due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of financial resources, and cultural practices around sanitation.

Methodology

Research Design

The study follows a descriptive research design, which aims to provide a detailed account of the sanitation practices in the selected areas of Bamautia block.

Sample Size

A total of **160 households** were selected for the study, with **40 households from each of the four Panchayats** in Bamautia Block. This ensures that a representative sample of the rural population is covered.

Data Collection Methods

- **Primary Data:** Structured interviews were conducted with local residents, village leaders, and sanitation workers. Household surveys were administered to collect information on sanitation facilities, toilet usage, and waste management practices.
- **Secondary Data:** Relevant documents were sourced from local government offices, the Rural Development Department of Tripura, and SBM implementation reports to understand the progress and challenges of SBM in the region.

Findings of the Study

The following key findings emerged from the study:

- **Toilet Construction:** The study revealed that the majority of households (approximately 75%) in the selected Panchayats have access to toilets constructed under SBM. However, many households still practice open defecation, especially in the more remote areas, due to insufficient toilet maintenance and lack of water access.
- **Awareness of SBM:** While awareness about SBM and its objectives was relatively high, there was limited understanding of proper waste disposal and hygiene practices. Only 40% of respondents were aware of the importance of handwashing and safe disposal of waste.
- **Challenges in Adoption:** Financial constraints and lack of adequate training on toilet maintenance were the primary barriers to full adoption. Many households were unable to maintain the toilets due to a lack of water supply or non-availability of adequate cleaning supplies.
- **Government Support:** Despite government efforts, the implementation of SBM faced challenges related to local governance. While toilet construction was achieved, the involvement of Panchayats in sustaining sanitation efforts (e.g., waste management and water supply) was minimal.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are proposed to improve sanitation in Bamautia block and enhance the effectiveness of SBM:

- **Enhanced Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct awareness programs focusing not only on toilet construction but also on the importance of hygiene, proper waste disposal, and toilet maintenance. Local leaders and health workers should be actively involved in these campaigns.
- **Financial Support for Maintenance:** Provide financial assistance to poor households for toilet maintenance, including subsidies for water connection and cleaning supplies.
- **Strengthening Local Governance:** Empower Panchayats to take more active roles in monitoring sanitation facilities and implementing waste management programs. This could include regular checks on toilet usage and maintenance.
- **Water Supply Integration:** Since many households face water scarcity, the government should integrate water supply schemes with SBM efforts to ensure that toilets can be used effectively.

Conclusion

The Swachh Bharat Mission has made significant strides in addressing sanitation issues in rural Tripura, including Bamautia block. However, challenges remain in terms of toilet maintenance, waste management, and full community participation. By addressing the barriers to SBM adoption, such as financial constraints and lack of awareness, the effectiveness of sanitation initiatives can be improved, leading to healthier and cleaner rural communities in Tripura.

References

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