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10 years of Swachh Bharat Mission: Its aims and status on key targets

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Swachh Bharat Mission, one of the first programmes announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he took office in 2014, completes 10 years on October 2. While announcing the “Clean India campaign”, the PM had said: “A clean India would be the best tribute India could pay to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary in 2019.”

The mission was divided into SBM-Gramin for villages, and SBM-Urban for cities, executed by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs respectively.

SBM’s focus areas were building individual toilets, community toilets, solid waste management, and leading awareness campaigns aimed at behavioural changes.

Targets of SBM

The PM announced that the SBM’s main goal was to make India “Open defecation-free” (ODF) by October 2, 2019, for which crores of household and community toilets had to be constructed. The definition of ODF under the mission is as follows: “A city/ ward can be notified/ declared as an ODF city/ ODF ward if, at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating in the open.”

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The aim was to equip all households with individual toilets, ensure communities have cluster toilets, and that school and anganwadi toilets have waste management systems. Solid waste includes organic and inorganic materials (kitchen waste, plastics, metals, etc.), while liquid waste management deals with wastewater that is no longer fit for human consumption.

To achieve this, the government's assistance was increased from Rs 10,000 per toilet (under the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan of the previous UPA government) to Rs 12,000 under SBM. When the mission completed five years in 2021, the government launched SBM 2.0, with a focus on garbage-free cities, faecal sludge, plastic waste, and greywater management.

Achievements so far

With over 10 crore toilets constructed, PM Modi declared 6 lakh villages open defecation-free on October 2, 2019. Urban India, except for cities in [West Bengal](#), was announced as ODF in December 2019 by the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry.

66 lakh individual toilets were constructed against the target of 59 lakh, the Ministry said. The Centre also said it released Rs 57,469.22 crore to states and UTs for SBM-G between 2014-2015 and 2018-2019. The [Budget](#) for SBM-U was Rs 62,009 crore.

5.54 lakh villages and 3,913 cities have been declared as ODF+ under the second iterations of SBM-G and SBM-U from 2020-21. ODF+ means that besides being ODF, these villages have arrangements for liquid waste management as well.

For SBM-G 2.0, the Cabinet had cleared spending of Rs 1.40 lakh crore from 2020-21 to 2024-2025, of which Rs 52,497 crore was from the Drinking Water and Sanitation Department. SBM-U 2.0 was approved in 2021, with allocation of Rs 1.41 lakh crore.

All 2,400 legacy landfills in cities were to be cleared by 2025-2026. So far, only 30% of the target has been achieved in terms of the area to be cleared, while 41% of the waste remediation goal has been met. The SBM-U dashboard shows 97% of municipal wards have door-to-door collection of waste and 90% of them have 100% segregation at source.

Impact of the mission

In 2018, the World Health Organisation estimated that 3 lakh deaths due to diarrhoea and protein-energy malnutrition would be averted due to the SBM-G from 2014 to October 2019. “Unsafe sanitation caused an estimated 199 million cases of diarrhoea annually before the start of the SBM in 2014. These have been gradually reducing, and will almost be eliminated when universal use of safe sanitation facilities is achieved by October 2019,” the WHO said.

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A recent study has found a link between reduction in infant deaths and SBM. The report, published in Nature on September 2, said the mission may have led to 60,000 to 70,000 fewer infant deaths annually from 2014 to 2020. The study noted that there had been a decline in infant mortality from 2003 to 2020, but the decrease was more after 2015.



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