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# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mahatma Gandhi's Vision of a Swacch Bharat

Dr. Dharm Veer Singh

Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of ENGLISH Government Degree College (Affiliated to Kumaun University Nainital) Tanakpur, Champawat, Utrakhand, India

## Abstract

On 2nd October 2014, Mahatma Gandhi's 145th Birthday, the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi held a broom in his hand and led the country for Adopting Gandhi's vision of a Swacch Bharat. When the Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy swept The roads clean, not only is the world awe struck, it also served as a reminder to all Indians about the vision and values of Mahatma Gandhi that are entrusted to Every Indian, coming from all sections of the society. During his struggle for independence, after Gandhi travelled to different parts of India, he makes an observation that Swaraj or independence will have no value for India if we do not improve our dirty habits. He is referring to the lack of adequate toilets and sanitation facilities mainly in rural India and the resulting open defecation that he witnesses. Throughout the freedom struggle, Mahatma Gandhi keeps reminding his followers, of the deep roots connection between Swaraj and sanitation. His quest for cleanliness and sanitation does not obviously conclude with India's Independence. While addressing the partition refugees at the Kurukshetra camp in 1947, Gandhi does not forget to remind them that the cleanliness and sanitation of their refugee camp is in their own hands and that they must make every effort to keep the camp clean and hygienic.

**Keywords:** Prime Minister, clean and hygienic, Swacch Bharat etc

Gandhi's thoughts and actions are not limited to peace, non-violence and independence. He also advocates and shared his thoughts on various aspects of the society, particularly for ensuring overall and inclusive development of India and the world. Mahatma Gandhi warns against the destructive development of the West, uses the Charkha as a symbol for promoting decentralized growth, initiates Harijan, a journal for creating a just and egalitarian society and focused on traditional ways of doing things. However, the one aspect of human society

that is closest to Mahatma Gandhi is that of sanitation and cleanliness. If Gandhi has to choose between working for India's independence and sanitation, he would have instantaneously chosen the latter. Gandhi is of the firm belief that sanitation is even more important than political freedom. Sharing his thoughts on what makes an ideal village, in the journal Harijan, Gandhi has written, "An ideal village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation." Sanitation and cleanliness are the first problems, according to Gandhi, that need to be addressed in the making of an ideal nation. In all these years, we have remembered Gandhi for his non-violent struggle for India's independence, but his other teachings – especially on cleanliness and sanitation – are both very relevant and the need of the hour.

Mahatma Gandhi is also deeply interested in Naturopathy and writes at length about the various cures found in nature. Gandhi is of the belief that sickness is a result of unhealthy living and therefore man himself is responsible for the diseases he contracts. Wherever Gandhi goes, he always remembered to monitor and assess the cleanliness and sanitation of that place, and alerts people whenever he finds unclean lavatories, piles of unattended waste or puddles of standing water. Gandhi does not even exclude religious places from his analysis and is often found telling people that religion and sanitation have to be seen as one since cleanliness is not next to – but is godliness in itself.

Gandhi is particularly disappointed after visiting the Holy River Ganga at Haridwar during the Kumbh Mela in 1915. He later penned down his grievance in Young India, an English weekly edited by him, where he says, "I have gone there full of hope and reverence. But while I realize the grandeur of the holy Ganga and the holier Himalayas, I look little to inspire me in what man is doing in this holy place." He further writes, "To my great grief, I see sanitation, both moral and physical... There is

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Defilement of the mighty stream, the River Ganga, even In the name of religion.” Unfortunately, the holy River Ganga – and other holy Rivers in India – continue to fight the pollution menace Even till the present day. Gandhi has, some 100 years Ago, notes and urges that the bank of the holy River Ganga is not the place that men and women should use For their morning ablutions. Instead it is a place where All of us should sit in quiet contemplation and find God. It is hoped that all Indian citizens will pay heed to this Advice of Mahatma Gandhi and help keep our holy Rivers clean and hygienic.

The most notable contribution of Mahatma Gandhi Towards keeping India clean is his teachings of simple Living and high thinking. Gandhi advocates that each Person follow a simplistic lifestyle, consuming only so Much that is required for living a healthy life and not so Much so as to become extravagant. Gandhi is wary of Generating waste and his teachings encourages his Followers to minimise the generation of waste. Gandhi Uses to frown at the large-scale wastage of flowers that are given to him in his returning uneaten plates. Gandhi is so disturbed by such behaviour, which he Attributes to “bad breeding”, that he wishes to organise An educational campaign against this menace. Mahatma Gandhi’s teachings are as relevant today as they were in Pre-independence India. While 1947 brights political Freedom to India, Gandhi’s dream of a Clean and Hygienic India remains unfulfills even in the present Day. Mahatma Gandhi has a vision of total sanitation for All, and an India where all parts of the country are clean And without waste.

Cleanliness is the Gandhi an way of Living and it is this message that must reach all citizens Of India so they can help achieve the unfulfills dream Of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi ji keps telling the students and workers about the importance of cleanliness and suggestes them to do the first thing. From 1946 to January 1948, he lays more emphasis on the education of cleanliness and sanitation. According to him, public education on cleanliness and hygiene are the most opportunities during railway and ship travel. Cleanliness and cleanliness are very much in the mind of Gandhiji, because immediately after independence he is very much distracted by what he is seeing in refugee camps.

On 13 October 1947, he says that he attaches great importance to the problem of sanitation and the

state of sanitation in refugee camps. He says that though Indians have experience of organizing fairs, religious functions and Congress sessions and conferences, but ‘we are not used to the life of camps in the people’. Indians do not have a sense of social hygiene, due to which the pollution reaches dangerous levels, and there is a danger of spreading infectious and communicable diseases. On 29 January 1948, a day before his martyrdom, he prepares the constitution of the proposed LokSevaSangh. Later it is considered as the last will of Gandhiji. The sixth task of the servant in this document is here: he would have to teach the villagers about cleanliness and hygiene and take all precautionary measures to protect them from ill health and diseases. Cleanliness and cleanliness remains a priority throughout Gandhiji’s life and till the end of his life.

Education should be given more priority than literacy. It is noteworthy that since then cleanliness and sanitation became an integral part and basis of all political programs and social reforms. Cleanliness lessons for Gandhiji and his companions in the ashrams Beginning in the Phoenix Ashram in South Africa by the early twentieth century, flush toilets became widespread and the effects of sewage pollution are well known. But adequate and assured water supply is essential to promote flush toilets with proper drains and disposal systems. It is very difficult to do this in rural areas. Right science and proper technology is the challenge before Gandhiji in Phoenix. Covering human excreta with sufficient dry soil and collecting and disposing of it safely is an established practice in all models. In all experiments, sewage is finally dumped into the fields and uses as organic fertilizer.

Prabhudas Gandhi has written that if the history of Gandhiji’s ashrams is carefully observes, it will be known that experiments in toilets have a unique place. If this process is meticulously written from beginning to end, then an authentic and suitable manual on toilet construction and use can be prepared. For Gandhi, cleanliness and sanitation is an important task in India. Gandhi’s desire to remove the stain of untouchability from Indian society inspired him to work on toilets and sanitation. They do not accept the tradition of the society that some people should do cleaning work and they should be doomed to do the right thing and keep doing it. Commitment towards cleanliness is the main element of social reform. In the ashram, it is

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emphasized that no one should be called from outside for this purpose. The members themselves uses to do the complete cleaning in turn. The residents of the ashram has to take care that dirt should not be spread in the streets and corridors by spitting etc.

Gandhiji uses to welcome the passionate and determined youth full of nationalist zeal, who wants to join the ashram. But he also warns that he would have to pass the test of cleaning the toilet bucket. Mahatma Gandhi gives an excellent message to the nation by providing education to the people around him about maintaining cleanliness. He has dreamed of “Clean India” for which he wants all the citizens of India to work together to make the country clean. In order to fulfil Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of a clean India, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi started the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on 02 October 2014 and appealed to all the citizens of India to join this campaign for its successful implementation. The objective of this campaign is to achieve the goal of Swachh Bharat in the next five years so that the 150th birth anniversary of Bapu can be celebrated as the achievement of this goal. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan inspires people to do 100 hours of labor every year towards cleaning. Nine eminent personalities like Mridala Sinha, Sachin Tendulkar, Baba Ramdev, Shashi Tharoor, Anil Ambani, Kamal Haasan, Salman Khan, Priyanka Chopra and the team of Taarak Mehta Kaooltah Chashmah were invited by the Hon’ ble Prime Minister to join the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Provide support, share photos of it on social media and get nine other people to join you so that it becomes a series. The general public is also asked to share their support on social media by writing the hashtag My Clean India. In public meetings and civic functions, Gandhi addresses many public meetings, meetings, small groups, volunteers, women and ashrams.

Many municipal give him civic felicitations. On most such occasions he speaks of cleanliness and sanitation. Almost every Congress member In the big conference, Gandhiji uses to raise the issue of cleanliness in his speech. For Gandhiji, dirt is evil. He has said – there is a trio of evils – “dirt, poverty and laziness – which you have to face, and you broom, kunior” And castor oil and if you believe me, you will fight with a spinning wheel. Gandhiji spoke in the celebrations organized by the city and municipalities and called for improving the condition of cleanliness by drawing attention to the

mess. He considers the cleaning work as the most important work of the municipalities. When the Congress expressed its desire to participate in the municipal elections, he advises that after becoming a councillor, the Congress workers should become good sweepers. In the matter of cleanliness, he appreciates the municipal administration of the West. On December 21, 1924, at a civic function in Belgaum, he says, there is one thing we can and should learn from the West, the science of civic sanitation. We are used to rural life, where the need for mass cleaning is not felt much. But the civilization of the West is materialistic and that is why its inclination is towards the development of cities by ignoring the villages. The people of the West have developed the science of mass cleaning and we have learned a lot from it. Our narrow and troublesome streets, our suffocating houses, criminals’ neglect of drinking water sources have to be rectified. The biggest service from the municipality will be to make people follow the laws of cleanliness. 1. Mahatma Gandhi said that cleanliness is more important than political freedom. 2. If a person is not clean then he cannot remain healthy. 3. The villages of India can be made ideal only with better cleanliness. 4. It is important to keep the toilet as clean as your drawing room. 5. By keeping the rivers clean, we can keep our civilization alive. The importance of internal cleanliness was underlined by Bapu in the Young India issue of December 10, 1925 in this way, “Internal cleanliness is the first thing, which should be taught, other things first and most important should be implemented after the completion of the lesson. “He considers internal and external cleanliness to be essential for human progress. He considers cleanliness as the most important component of self-development and national development and clarified it as follows – “It is as important for a holy soul to live in a clean body as it is necessary for a place, city, state and country to remain clean.” So that the people living in it are clean and honest.” His philosophy of cleanliness is very broad. He expresses this generality by saying that if a person is not clean, he cannot remain healthy. And if he is not healthy, he will not be able to live with a healthy mood. A healthy mood will lead to the development of a healthy character.

After traveling across the country for two years after his return from South Africa, Gandhi realizes that cleanliness and social hygiene are a big and insurmountable problem. Lack of information is not the

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only reason for this, it is also a reason for that mentality, which prevented people from thinking about this most serious problem affecting health and environment. In South Africa, Gandhi admitted that Indians has problems with cleanliness and hygiene, as alleged by the British. But he successfully opposes the point that prejudice and the threat of competition about color is the main reason for discrimination. But wherever he goes in his own country, he looks the taboo, stigma, and exploitation associated with the community of filth, dust, garbage and scavengers. Gandhiji has written Hind Swaraj in 1909. In his scheme of self-government, Gram Swaraj and Hind Swaraj fought for the political independence of the country could not be different and he gave its principles and functions. Later it is presented as a compliance and constructive work of the Ashram.

In this way, cleanliness and sanitation and removal of untouchability became two big creative programmers. Gandhiji in Champaran The seriousness of the problem of cleanliness and sanitation among the villagers in the country became clear in front of Gandhiji and his companions when they started work in Champaran. First of all it came to the notice of Gandhiji that permanent work is impossible without properrural education. Cleanliness is a difficult task in the villages of Champaran. Gandhijisays that even the landless labour families are not ready to raise their own manual scavengers. Joined the team of Champaran, Dr. Dev regularly sweeps roads and grounds, cleaned wells and filled ponds. Gradually, an environment of self-reliance starts being created in the matter of cleaning the village. Due to his firmness about the need for education, training and practice to introduce and inculcate a work inclination towards it, Gandhi starts teaching cleanliness and hygiene in Champaran and Satyagraha Ashram schools. Andwrites in Navajivan on the condition of the fields.

He is pained that the farmers and their families are living in filthy and unhygienic conditions due to ignorance and carelessness. The term ‘open defecation’ is now used in English in national and international reports for open defecation, but Gandhi ji uses the more precise term ‘open evacuation’ for it. Many diseases are caused by not using toilets and not defecating in the open, he says . Elderly, children, sick and weak persons in families and settlements cannot go out for defecation, so only

courtyards, streets and houses are converted into toilets and the place becomes dirty and the air gets polluted. He then suggested that people build simple toilets or arrange bins, in which the faeces should be covered with dry soil. Gandhi ji keeps writing about cleanliness and cleanliness on every occasion, although he never agreed to this, but he uses to understand that the destitute, poor and downtrodden class people have taken dirt as a part of their life.

In Gandhiji’s words, the problem of cleanliness and sanitation is at the ‘collective’ level. He also says that Indians keep their home and courtyard free from dust, insects and lizards, but do not hesitate to throw everything in their neighbor’s courtyard! Even today we have not been able to eliminate this evil. One evening in January 1935, Professor Winsor of St. Stephen’s College, Delhi, along with a dozen students, met Gandhi. Responding to a question about medical help to the villagers, Gandhi says that they should explain how important cleanliness and hygiene is as a precaution and post-treatment care. Distributing a thousand malaria pills is good, but not commendable. Education to avoid diseases by filling sewage pits, removing dirty water, cleaning wells and tanks would be much appreciated. When ask for instructions on how to attend school for Harijans, Gandhi reiterates the priority given to education about cleanliness and sanitation. 7. Everyone should clean his own garbage. 8. I will not let anyone pass my mind with dirty feet. 9. Admitting one’s mistake is like applying a broom which leaves the surface shiny and clean. 10. Adopt cleanliness in your conduct in such a way that it becomes your habitAt first it is only an idea but after Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched it as a Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in 2014, it took the shape of a national mass movement. In 2014, while addressing the people of India on the occasion of Independence Day, Prime Minister Modi had also mentioned about ‘Clean India’ in his speech. He says, “How do we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi? Cleanliness and cleanliness are closest to Mahatma Gandhi’s heart. Will we people, when we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 2019, protect our villages, cities, We don’t take a pledge not to keep even a speck of dirt in the area, school, temple, hospital and whatever places we have. It is not only by the government but with the participation of the people. That’s why we should do this together. This nationwide cleanliness campaign ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ is implemented on 2 October 2014, the

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aim of this scheme is to make India completely clean by 2019. Modi said that Swachh Bharat Mission is patriotism inspired and politically motivated. His idea changes the thoughts of the people into Gandhi's ideas of cleanliness.

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