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Q7(b)

Discuss the implications of 'Swachha Bharat Abhiyaan'. Do you think that civil society has a role to play here? Substantiate your answer with an example

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Perspectives on the study of Indian society
Perspectives on the study of Indian society: Indology (G.S. Ghurye); Structural functionalism (M.N. Srinivas); Marxist sociology (A.R. Desai).

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the implications of 'Swachha Bharat Abhiyaan'. Do you think that civil society has a role to play here? Substantiate your answer with an example

Revision summary

The mission expanded toilets and a civic cleanliness language.

Gains depend on water, use and waste treatment.

Caste-stigmatised sanitation work is the hard implication.

Civil society is needed for behaviour, audit and worker dignity.

Example: groups that pair toilets with an end to **manual scavenging**.

Introduction

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan made sanitation a national mission of toilets, behaviour, and images of cleanliness. Its implications are material, caste-ridden, and moral. Civil society has a necessary role because the state cannot scrub habit and stigma alone.

Body

Implications

- Toilet construction raised coverage numbers and could cut **open defecation** where water, pits, and use actually followed the plan.
- Public hygiene campaigns named cleanliness as civic duty, a Yogendra Singh-type modernization of a daily tradition.
- **Caste implication is sharp:** sanitation labour remains stigmatised. A mission that does not end **manual scavenging** can become cleanliness for some, dirt work for Dalits.
- **Gender:** toilets can mean safety. Without water and privacy they become unused symbols.
- **Rural-urban:** city waste and village pits are different sociologies; one slogan covers both.

Civil society's role

- Yes. NGOs, panchayat women's groups, and social audits translate a mission into use, repair, and dignity of sanitation workers.
- Example: Sulabh-type organisations and many local rights groups combined toilet access with campaigns against dry latrines and for worker dignity, a civil path the mission needs.

- Media and school clubs spread the norm; they can also hide caste if they only photograph a VIP broom.

Limit

- Civil society is not a substitute for public drains, water, and labour rights.
- Elite cleanliness clubs can moralise the poor without touching the sewer contract.

Flow diagram

Swachh Bharat toilets -> Health safety
Swachh Bharat toilets -> Caste labour stigma
Civil society audit dignity -> Use and worker rights

Conclusion

Swachh Bharat's implication is a possible public-health gain wrapped in caste and gender tests. Civil society has a role in use, audit, and worker dignity, as sanitation-rights groups show. Toilets without those roles are a count, not a clean society.

Facts & figures

Open defecation

The public-health target the mission named.

Manual scavenging

Caste labour that cleanliness campaigns may leave untouched.

Sulabh-type civil work

Non-state sanitation access plus a dignity idiom.

Gendered toilet use

Safety gain only if water, light and privacy exist.

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