

**|LAW AUDIENCE JOURNAL|
|VOLUME 1|ISSUE 2|DECEMBER 2018|ISSN (O): 2581-6705|**

|LAW AUDIENCE JOURNAL™|

|VOLUME 1 & ISSUE 2|

|DECEMBER 2018|

|ISSN (O): 2581-6705|

EDITED BY:

LAW AUDIENCE JOURNAL'S

EDITORIAL BOARD

COPYRIGHT © 2018 BY LAW AUDIENCE JOURNAL (ISSN (O): 2581-6705)

All Copyrights are reserved with the Authors. But, however, the Authors have granted to the Journal (Law Audience Journal), an irrevocable, non-exclusive, royalty-free and transferable license to publish, reproduce, store, transmit, display and distribute it in the Journal or books or in any form and all other media, retrieval systems and other formats now or hereafter known.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, write to the publisher, subject of the email or letter must be "Permission Required," at the email or postal address given below.

Law Audience Journal,

Mr. Varun Kumar, V.P.O. Gagret, Ward No.5, Tehsil. Ghanari, District. Una, Himachal Pradesh, Pincode: 177201,

Phone: +91-8351033361,

Email: lawjournal@lawaudience.com, info@lawaudience.com,

Website: www.lawaudience.com,

Contact Timings: 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM.

DISCLAIMER:

Law Audience Journal (ISSN (O): 2581-6705) and Its Editorial Board Members do not guarantee that the material published in it is 100 percent reliable. You can rely upon it at your own risk. But, however the Journal and Its Editorial Board Members have taken the proper steps to provide the readers with relevant material. Proper footnotes & references have been given to avoid any copyright or plagiarism issue. Articles published in Volume 1 & Issue 2 are the original work of the authors.

Views or Opinions or Suggestions, expressed or published in the Journal are the personal point of views of the Author(s) or Contributor(s) and the Journal & Its Editorial Board Members are not liable for the same.

While every effort has been made to avoid any mistake or omission, this publication is published online on the condition and understanding that the publisher shall not be liable in any manner to any person by reason of any mistake or omission in this publication or for any action taken or omitted to be taken or advice rendered or accepted on the basis of this work. All disputes subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of Courts, Tribunals and Forums at Himachal Pradesh only.

A STUDY ON IMPACTS OF OPEN DEFECATION ON HEALTH & SOCIETY

AUTHORED BY: MR. PRATEEK SINGH & CO-AUTHORED BY: MS. RIMJHIM
PRIYA, SHRI RAMSWAROOP MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY.

1. ABSTRACT:

Open defecation in simple words refers to the practice whereby people go out in fields, bushes, forests, open bodies of water, or other open spaces rather than using a toilet to defecate. The practice of open defecation is rampant in India and shamefully our country is home to the world's largest population of people who defecate in the open. According to several types of research, the data that popped-up is very shameful. Everyday people excrete around 65,000 tons of faeces into the open environment.

Being a land of cultures and traditions, India still is a way backward country in comparison to the other developed nations of the world and open defecation is still practiced as a well-imbibed traditional practice among most of the societies. Half of the Indian population i.e. nearly about 524 million people still defecate in open areas instead of using the toilets.

Open defecation poses a severe threat to the health of people and also it adversely affects our environment and most importantly degrades the image of our nation at the global level. Every year, diarrhoea kills 1,17,285 children under the age of five in India and it's a stigma on our nation that India reports the highest number of diarrheal deaths among children under-five.

The biggest question that arises here is that what could be the reasons behind people defecating in open? Other than open defecating being a traditional practice, it is also due to the reason that half of the Indian population is still below the poverty line and they can't afford to construct toilets, lack of knowledge is also a relevant factor that contributes in the causes of open defecating.

There are several other reasons attached to open defecation. This research paper would be dealing with the various reasons which are the major causes of open defecation problem in India, along with it; this paper is a study of the impact of open defecation on the human

health and the environment. This paper would also be explaining the steps and measures taken by the Indian government regarding the problem and its curb.

2. INTRODUCTION:

For the majority, going to the toilets is as simple and natural as breathing. However, for many, it is still like night terrors. About 2.3 billion of the total population around the globe doesn't have access to clean, safe and reliable toilets. They generally have to walk for miles every day in quest of a safe spot to relieve them in the open. The problem of inadequate sanitation leads to an estimated death of 280,000 people worldwide, annually.¹

*Open defecation refers to the practice whereby people go out in fields, bushes, forests, open bodies of water, or other open spaces rather than using the toilet to defecate.*²

3. CONDITIONS IN INDIA:

The problem of open defecation is a widespread problem and gigantic problem in front of many countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and India etc. Studying the conditions prevailing in India in regards to the associated problem of open defecation. In India, about 732 million people out of the total population do not have a proper means of approach to proper toilets. The statistics shows that as much as 90% of the river water is contaminated by faeces and generally the village people having no proper water supply drink water from the same rivers or use hand pumps having channel from the river bed, even they bathe and wash their clothes and utensils from the same water, and the worst part being is that they even cook food with the contaminated water. The water being affected by the faeces contains germs, pathogens and worms from the faeces spread life-threatening water-borne and vector-borne diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid, schistosomiasis and trachoma.³

According to the figures presented by the *United Nations, about 524 million Indians (till June 2017) defecate in the open every day.*⁴

¹ <https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/V2QQ8XWD0awEiIe4OQ4KcJ/Opinion--Making-India-open-defecation-free.html>.

² <http://unicef.in/Whatwedo/11/Eliminate-Open-Defecation>.

³ <https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/how-open-defecation-affect-human-health-environment-and-solutions.php>

⁴ *supra* note 2.

When *Shri.* Narendra Modi took oath as the Prime Minister of India, he took the initiative and launched several programs in order to make India an open-defecation free country and announced that by the end of 2019 India would be an open defecation free nation. The funding allotted under the “*Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*”, for the rural population of India saw a jump in recent years as compared to the fund allotment of the urban cities in order to curb the problem of open defecation at the very grass root level and as per the reports presented by the Central Government about 260 Districts in India have already been declared as open-defecation free. Over 3000,000 villages across India have achieved this status, as presented by the *Swachh Bharat Mission* (SBM) rural portals.⁵

4. HYPOTHESIS:

1. Find out the impact & reach of the government schemes related to open defecation.
2. It has been assumed that most of the population might be aware & using the government scheme.

5. METHODOLOGY:

The research methodology includes empirical research. The samples collected are mostly the primary, raw and unstructured data collected on the basis of convenience sampling. In order to get our sample data, we have conducted a small survey in seven of the nearby villages on the outskirts of Lucknow, which are on a convenient distance from our university, namely Srinagar, Deva, Barethi, Maati, Khajoor Gaon, Paharpur and Raniganj. The population of the village consists mostly of poor people who are illiterate, below the poverty line and people who are the backward classes of the society. The samples are mostly collected by interviewing random people from the villages. Some of the common questions asked from them include:

- First and foremost the most basic question that:
Whether they have access to a personal toilet or not?
- The second question was that:
Whether they are aware of the scheme of our Government “Sauchalaya Nirman Yojna” or not?

⁵ <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/urbanisation/budget-2018-to-make-india-open-defecation-free-centre-must-invest-less-in-building-toilets-59567>

- The third question was that if they are aware of the scheme:
Whether they are benefited by the scheme or not?
- The fourth question rotates around:
Whether they are aware of the health and hygiene issues associated with open defecation?

These were some of the most common questions asked by the people of the villages. The villages covered by us consists mostly of 100 to 150 houses and for our convenience, we have conversed with around 15-20 houses in each of the villages and came up with an assumption that same conditions might be prevailing in the entire village. The sample data was collected on the basis of interview and the interview was made from the people from various age groups starting from 18 to 70, to bring out a clear and better picture related to the problem and the conditions prevailing.

6. DATA COLLECTED:

On the basis of data collected after the samples collected from the survey, we made several observations and on the basis of the observations, four major problems could be drawn out:-

1. The first and major problem was related to the awareness about the scheme:

Several observations were made on the basis of the findings, some are as follows:

- The major problem found at ground zero was about the awareness of the government schemes and about the steps and measures taken by our government in order to promote *Swachh Bharat*. On the basis of the samples collected, we found that most of them were unaware of the schemes started by our government to promote an open defecation free country.
- The second observation was that it might be possible that they were aware of the schemes but were unable to create further awareness.
- The third observation was that some of them were hesitant to answer, so it might be possible that they said “no” just as a rescue answer to cut any further questioning as they were afraid that we are government officials and they don’t want to meddle with us.

- Even in the remote villages, there is still no reach of the government scheme and in such area's nobody is aware of the schemes of the government taken to eliminate open defecation.
- 2. *The second major problem was related to the Quality of Raw Materials:***
- The second observation brings out a clearer picture of the quality of raw materials used by the contractors in the construction of the toilets.
 - Some of the villagers informed us they receive Rs. 12,000 under the scheme for the construction of the toilets, but the contractors keep the money with him and use a very cheaper quality of raw materials like the bricks they use were of very low quality, even the cement and other requisites used were of a much-degraded quality.
 - Most of the people complained that due to the low-quality material used, the toilets automatically become unfit for their use within a month or two.
 - Some of them informed that they use the toilets for keeping cow dung cakes or use it as their storeroom.
- 3. *The third major problem was related to the awareness in regards to health and hygiene issues:***
- The third major observation was related to the awareness of the health issues created by the open defecation. Most people were aware of the health issues caused by open defecation, but still, they defecate in open as they have no reach to personal toilets.
 - In Khajoor Gaon we found that most of the children were victims of Diarrhoea, which the most frequent problem is caused by drinking of contaminated water and is most common in the children. The reason is that the septic tanks made are made near the water beds or near the hand pumps making the underground water channel polluted and when people drink that water, they automatically fall sick.
 - The other main difficulty faced was by the women of the areas like during their menstrual cycle they have no access to clean and safe toilets leading to many health and hygiene

issues. Some of them informed us that they are affected by infections in their private parts.

- Diarrhoea, Typhoid and Cholera are some of the major waterborne diseases caused by the use of contaminated water.
- We also found that people are not aware of the hygiene factor. Like, we saw a lady who just came from the bushes; she did not even wash her hands and used the same utensil to give water to someone without cleaning it.
- Other than these health issues many other major problems occur while defecating in open like according to reports most people die with snake bite while they were defecating in open.
- Even sometimes people are not aware of the area they use for defecating, like the bushes and shrubs in the area might be poisonous which may lead to certain skin diseases like rashes, itching and other skin infections. Also sometimes the touch of certain spices of plants leads to death.

4. *The fourth major problem was in relation to the impact on the society:*

- The areas where open defecation is widely practiced are generally more prone to various problems like the problem of pure and clean water, problem-related to clean air and other related issues.
- In the Muslim populated area like Deva, people were still found hesitant to talk on such taboo topics. They either turn down the question or ignored it.
- Even on the basis of the observations made we found that the houses having toilets are meant only for the use of the women of the house, the male members still travel miles to defecate in open environment.
- Some of the people take defecating in open as their traditional custom followed since time immemorial. This shows the level of backwardness of people that they still believed in the customary norms.

- Other than many other issues, the major impact on the society is related to the safety of women; many women are molested, harassed or raped while defecating in the open which leads to present a bad image of India in front of other nations.
- Also defecating in open leads tons of secretion of feaces in the open environment leading to pollution of the soil, air and water beds.

These were some of the major observations and findings made on the basis of the sample collected.

7. POSSIBLE SUGGESTIONS:

- The first and major possible suggestion could be that to eliminate the mediator i.e. the contractors or surveyors because they use cheap raw materials to construct the toilets keeping the rest of the money in their pocket.
- On the basis of findings, the second suggestion drawn could be that the amount allotted to an individual should be directly given to them instead giving them to the contractors, as most people complained about the quality of material used and in their words if money is transferred in their accounts, they can add some of their personal amount in the fund and can construct a better toilet.
- Taking reference of the condition in Bihar, in Bihar, the government asks the individual to construct the toilet and after the construction a government official visits and checks the toilet and then the money i.e. Rs. 12000 is transferred in the individual's account.
- *Toilets should be made a status symbol:*

We have to promote toilets as a sign of the status so that people want to have them. When you say "toilet" people often think of dark, dirty and smelly places. Instead, we need them to think of toilets as rooms of happiness – clean, colorful and not smelly.
- One more possible suggestion could be that start cleaning all the existing areas for reclamation and make it look so attractive and catchy that people don't get the idea to defecate.

- One possible suggestion could be that, the imposition of penalty on people who have toilets in their house, but still defecating in open.
- Lastly, education is the way to achieve all the goals, educate more and more people on the health hazard possessed by open defecation. Else we will still only be talking about things and not doing anything about it!

8. CONCLUSION:

On the basis of the findings made and observations drawn, we can draw a conclusion that we expected on the starting of writing this research paper that most of the people are aware of the government schemes and are benefited from the scheme, but at the end on the basis of the samples collected from the people the results were contrary from our assumptions. People were mostly not aware of the government schemes, also were not ready to discuss on such a taboo topic. In Muslim dominated area people were mostly hesitant to talk about such topics, also we found that in remote areas the scheme still has no reach and even people in such areas are not aware of the scheme.

We also have found in our personal observation that in most villages, people have all the other facilities like t.v., fridge, and cooler in their houses but are not having toilets this shows that people are still educationally backward that they are ignoring the facts related to the problems associated with open defecation. The other major finding was people still take it as a traditional practice practicing since time immemorial and take it as a custom followed by their ancestors.

Lastly, we would like to conclude by highlighting some of the possible solutions i.e.

- ✓ *To eliminate the mediator i.e. the contractors or surveyors,*
- ✓ *The amount allotted to an individual should be directly given to them instead of giving them to the contractors,*
- ✓ *Toilets should be made a status symbol,*
- ✓ *Imposition of penalty,*
- ✓ *Lastly education is a possible way to encourage people to use the toilets.*