

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Perception of Medical Students regarding “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” a cleanliness campaign: a qualitative study

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Abstract

Background: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan -A Cleanliness Campaign was launched all over India in 2014 to sensitize people to work in the direction of making India a clean country. Since youth constitute the future of the nation, their perception is very much important for the nation’s progress. Therefore, the present study was conducted among Indian medical undergraduate (IMUG) students regarding their perception about the current cleanliness drive going on in the country. **Aims & Objective:** To assess the perception of IMUG students about the cleanliness and innovative cleanliness practices. **Study Setting & Design:** A cross-sectional qualitative study was carried among IMUG students in a medical college of North India. **Material & Methods:** Study was conducted during the period of the Swachhata Pakhwara Abhiyan, celebrated all over the country to reinforce the cleanliness drive. IMUG students were invited to describe their perception on the topic “How can I keep My India clean”. Statistical Analysis: -Transcript was prepared and deductive coding was done and perceptions of students were categorized into four broad themes: -1. Behaviour change communication 2. Practicing cleanliness.3Interventions required for cleanliness 4. Legislation required in favour of cleanliness. **Results:** Majority of IMUG Students expressed that it is the behaviour change Communication and habit of practicing cleanliness everywhere, which will bring the change in cleanliness drive in the country with emphasis on innovative intervention and the role of legislation. **Conclusion:** -Proper direction and consistent motivation along with sound perception of cleanliness among citizens can contribute in reaching the desired goals of cleanliness.

Keywords

Medical students, Cleanliness, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Perception

Introduction

Health as per WHO definition is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Cleanliness being its integral part and parcel needs

to be maintained both, individually as well as of the surrounding. Issues related to Cleanliness remain a major challenge in India. As per report of Environmental Performance Index 2016, 2.4 billion people across the world do not have access to basic sanitation of which 550 million people fail to have

access to clean drinking water. India ranked 141th of the 180 countries worldwide in Environmental Performance Index in 2016 with Urban India generating around 68.8 million tons of garbage per year. According to Centre for Science and Environment, around 78 % of the sewage is untreated and 67% of rural areas still lack toilet facilities.(1)

Various campaigns have been launched by the government to resolve the issues related to cleanliness starting from Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in 1999. Its objective was to spread awareness and demand generation for sanitary facilities among the rural population. The Government of India also launched the Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP) to consider the contributions in the cleanliness campaign. NGP success prompted the Government to rename TSC as the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA), whose objective was to accelerate the sanitation coverage in rural areas.(2)

Thereafter, India launched Swachh Bharat (Clean India Mission) campaign on October 2, 2014, at Rajghat with an objective to achieve "Clean India" by October 2, 2019. The ambitious programme aimed at making the streets; roads and infrastructure across the country clean. It is India's largest cleanliness drive to date with 3 million government employees, school students, college students, famous personalities and NGO workers from all parts of India participating in 4,041 statutory cities, towns and associated rural areas.(3) The campaign launched with an estimated cost of around Rs 62,009 Crore. It also aims to achieve the elimination of open defecation in the country. (2)

It was emphasized that a clean India would make a significant impact on public health. It would safeguard income of the poor, ultimately contributing to the national economy. The Swachh Bharat Mission is being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (4) and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for urban and rural areas respectively. (5)

With this background this study was planned to assess the perception of MBBS undergraduate students regarding cleanliness drive under Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.

Aims & Objectives

1. To assess the perception of IMUG students about the various components under cleanliness campaign "Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan".

2. To assess perception of students about innovative practices which can contribute towards Cleanliness

Material & Methods

The present study was a qualitative study which was carried out among 100 medical undergraduate students in a Government Medical College from North India. In first step, medical students of first professional were enrolled in the study by convenient sampling method after taking consent from them and were instructed to describe in detail by writing an essay about their perception on "How can I Make my India clean". Every essay was assessed and analysed in depth by the authors on criteria's such as the novelty of thoughts and its feasibility. Based on analysis of each of the essay, it was found that most of the perceptions could be categorized into four broad themes which were Cleanliness Practices, Behaviour Change Communication, Interventions and Legislations required to improve Cleanliness. Students were called to clear any doubts in the essays, if authors were unable to understand any perception.

Data entry & Analysis: Every essay was assessed in depth by authors, wherever interpretation was difficult respective student was contacted for clarification and additional information gathered was recorded and documented simultaneously in the transcript in word document.

Based on the novelty and feasibility of ideas mentioned in the essays, deductive coding was done and overlapping codes were extracted, and the senior author resolved discrepancies. Codes were aligned together to generate 4 different themes related to cleanliness, which were Cleanliness Practices, Behaviour Change Communication, Interventions and Legislations required to improve Cleanliness. Direct quotes spoken in Hindi which illustrated important perception were mentioned in English

Results

Practices

Active Participation at the community level.

Students perceive that initiative should start at the ground level. "Charity Begins at home" and active participation of the community is crucial to bring out the change.

"Aao milkar bhoj uthayain ,Ek ekala thak jayega milkar bhoj uthayain"

Proper garbage segregation and disposal is an important aspect of the clean community. Covered Proper garbage segregation and disposal is an important aspect of the clean community. Covered dustbins should be used for waste disposal and kept away from residential areas.

“Har sadak galli nukkad par dustbin lagae jaae.”

Vehicles used for transportation of waste should also be covered. Students also emphasized the practice of keeping separate dustbins for biodegradable/non-biodegradable garbage in our homes. Every Individual should participate in cleanliness related initiatives undertaken by the Government. No one should throw garbage on the road, public places and not litter or spit on the road. Students mentioned that waste generated at household level can be an important source of energy by using bio-gas plants in village areas. The sewage treatment plant should be made in all cities for proper management of waste.

1. “Mahine mae 1 din milkar apne ghar ke aaspass ki safai kare.”

2. “Swacchta abhiyaan main bhag le rahe logo ko purshkaar dekar protsahit kare.”

3. “Har Saptah (week) naali nahar ityadi saaf karwaye jaaye.”

4. “Swachh rahega tabhi to aage badhega India”

Participants also realized that society should learn to pay a little respect to labourers who pick up garbage. Treating your society as your own property and not dumping the waste at a corner can be the 1st step in keeping India clean. Students also mentioned that everyone should Join

“Be the change which you want to see in the world. Stop blaming the govt. and start doing yourselves.”

Tree plantation

Students also highlighted the important role of Tree Plantation and suggested that it should be made mandatory activity at the school. “Varaksharoppan Pakhwada” should be organized during the month of July every year. An institute with maximum contribution should be felicitated on the Republic day function in New Delhi.

“Sirf hungame khada karna mera maksad nahi, Meri koshish hai ki yeh surat badlani chahiye.”

Say No to Plastic

Students also pointed out the biohazard aspects of accumulating Plastic waste (non-degradable waste) and emphasized the need of its reduction. “Usage of fiber or jute bag instead of plastic bag can bring out bigger change as most of the waste that we came

across spreading all over the streets are of plastic only.” Packets and wrappers of eatables should be thrown into dustbin only. Instead of throwing plastic bottles, we can use them for growing plants at home. “Cleanliness of our surrounding is like an organ of our body without which we are always sick.”

Students also shared that it requires a vision to keep India clean. “Let us Visualize the Dream to make My India clean”. Students emphasized the importance of leadership in keeping INDIA clean.

1. “Why this country is dirty about, Step ahead and does something

Not everything but anything, To keep our world out

Clean & green and so beautiful, like it had never been”

The student took a pledge that they are determined to bring out change in India.

2. “Desh hame deta hai sub kuch, hum bhi to kuch dena seekhein

Suraj hume roshni deta, hawa hmay jeevan deti hai, Bukh mittane ko roti

Hum sabki dharti pyarii hai”

3. “Swachh Bharat ka irada irada kar liya humne

Desh se yeh vadda

Yeh vadda kar liya humne”

4. “Today we pledge to keep our country clean then only we would expect is to be healthy and green.

Stop not; wait not, for anyone to come

Astonished you would be to see who joined,

Those who once threw waste on road have joined.

Then only assure your victory for sure,

When you have made yourself and country pure”

Behaviour Change Communication

Students perceived that behaviour change communication is very important to bring change in community hence, weekend Cleanliness campaign can be conducted at local level in the community.

1. “Smartness se jyada swacchta ka mahttav hain”

2. “Swachh Bharat, Swasth Bharat”.

3. Swachh tan main hi swachh mann ka niwas hota hain”.

4. “Clean India green India”.

Student mentioned that there is a need to create awareness among kids and youth which can be done through advertisement and movies. Special meetings, workshop, poster and debate competition can be organized throughout the year in school and

college to keep youth aware of their role in keeping the country clean.

Pledge for cleanliness can be taken on the first working day of each month at all Institution and Govt. Premises. Holidays should be utilized to clean Govt. Premises.

5. "Cleanliness is a right as well as duty, we must find in what we drink, the air we breathe and food we eat and surrounding we live in"

6. "What we require is not the way to clean India, but what we require is not to spill garbage in public area"

Education Campaign in the community should be organized (via mass media) to spread awareness about various methods of waste segregation and a concept to reduce, reuse and recycle. Non-Government Organization can play a major role in this regard. Open Defecation should be strongly discouraged by proper counselling and behaviour change.

Interventions required

Reforms in the syllabus at Teaching Institutions

Students suggested that, including extra teaching hours in the curriculum regarding cleanliness habits will make them responsible citizens in the future. Students perceived that debate, poster, collage, quiz competition on cleanliness topic should be conducted at school and college to spread awareness.

Rallies and Campaign at Community level

Awareness campaign can be organized at the community level by education & the health department to motivate the citizens in practicing cleanliness and keep community and country clean.

Efficient usage of alternative source of energy

Alternate source of energy like Bio gas, Solar Energy should be used as it does not produce pollutions.

Proper Waste Disposal & Sanitation

Proper waste segregation & waste disposal plays an important role in maintaining cleanliness in the community. Construction of more Toilets and ODF campaign, which is currently going on as part of Swachh Bharat mission is a step towards Clean India. There has to be separate vehicle at all tourist destinations to be ensured by municipalities so that waste is regularly collected and disposed off.

River Cleanliness drive

Communities residing near River beds actively involves in polluting river by washing clothes, animal bath and disposing of dead bodies of animals, which pollutes the water and major health hazard to

community consuming the water for daily consumptions. Various factories dump their waste directly into the rivers, making it unfit for usage for human consumption. Students mentioned that dumping waste into river without prior treatment can prove lethal to aquatic life as well as human life residing across the river bank. Cleanliness drive to clean our river is must for clean and healthy India.

Intersectoral Coordination

Coordination between Health Department, Education Department, Power Work Department, Irrigation Department, Municipal Corporation, Gram Panchayats and Police Department are important to ensure Cleanliness in the Community. There is a need to involve all the sectors at the common platform once in a month to ensure cleanliness activities are going in their respective areas. There is a need to devote one day per month for cleanliness activities to keep people sensitized about the importance of cleanliness.

The legislation required to improve Cleanliness

Students believed that strict legislation can produce an impact in the sustainable cleanliness of the country. Students emphasized that fine should be imposed for improper waste disposal in public places. DELHI METRO Corp is an evident example about how strong surveillance and strict action can help in maintaining cleanliness

In Similar way at the community level all the offenders should be strictly dealt with and there should be a helpline number to inform, if any citizen comes across someone who does not follow the cleanliness code of conduct.

Discussion

Students documented that, first of all, it is the behaviour change towards maintaining cleanliness which will lay down the backbone towards clean India. Behaviour change communication has to happen at the community level throughout the year so that the habit of cleanliness can be imbibed in all citizens of the country. Students emphasized the importance of Reduce, Reuse and recycle of the waste generated at the community level.

Students then documented the importance of practicing cleanliness in the workplace as important as our home and students were well aware of the ways by which cleanliness should be practiced. Tree Plantation, as well as non-usage of the plastic bags by the community will definitely boost the cleanliness drive.

Students felt that there is a strong need for legislative action, so that people behave in proper ways in community always. Proper waste Disposal and maintaining cleanliness of the river decreases the spread of water borne diseases.

Students then documented intervention required at the community level and at the country level to sustain cleanliness. Reforms in the school curriculum as well as competition at the educational Institutes with rallies and campaign organized at regular interval are important to keep people sensitized. Students also emphasized that efficient usage of alternative source of energy. Recycle of waste and proper disposal of waste especially at tourist places has an important role for clean city. Intersectoral Coordination between Health Department, Education Department, Power Work Department. Irrigation Department, Municipal Corporation, Gram Panchayats and Police Department is important to ensure Cleanliness in the Community.

Conclusion

Students have a clear perception about cleanliness though behavior change required.

Relevance of the study

This study helps to create awareness among medical students about cleanliness as well introduces them to their role in keeping the country clean.

Authors Contribution

BN: Concept and Design of the study, Reviewing and final approval; SKY: Data Collection, Manuscript Writing; RK: Manuscript Editing, Reviewing and final approval.

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Figures

