

Public Awareness and Citizens' Perception towards Swachh Bharat Mission: A Study in Coimbatore District

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Abstract : The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is one of India's major national initiatives aimed at improving sanitation, hygiene, waste management and cleanliness through public participation and behavioural change. The effectiveness of such a programme depends not only on the availability of sanitation infrastructure but also on citizens' awareness, participation, satisfaction and everyday cleanliness practices. The present study examines public awareness and citizens' perception towards the Swachh Bharat Mission in Coimbatore District. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design based on primary data collected from residents through a structured questionnaire. A sample of 300 respondents is proposed for the study using a convenient sampling method. The major variables considered are awareness, participation, satisfaction, cleanliness practices and perceived benefits of the mission. Percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, Chi-square test, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis are proposed to examine the relationships among the variables. The illustrative findings indicate that citizens generally possess a favourable perception towards the mission, while participation and cleanliness practices require continuous strengthening. The study further proposes that awareness and participation are positively associated with satisfaction and perceived benefits. The paper concludes that sustained citizen participation, behavioural communication, effective waste management and local-level monitoring are essential for strengthening the long-term impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission in Coimbatore District.

Index Terms - Swachh Bharat Mission, Public Awareness, Citizen Participation, Cleanliness Practices, Satisfaction, Perceived Benefits, Coimbatore District.

1. Introduction

Sanitation and cleanliness are important components of public health, environmental sustainability and quality of life. In India, sanitation has increasingly been approached not merely as an infrastructure issue but as a behavioural and social responsibility. The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched on 2 October 2014 with the objective of accelerating sanitation coverage and promoting behavioural change through a nationwide people's movement.

The initial phase of the mission focused strongly on eliminating open defecation and expanding access to sanitation facilities. The subsequent phase has placed greater emphasis on sustaining ODF behaviour and strengthening solid and liquid waste management and visual cleanliness.

The official SBM-G framework also identifies community participation, awareness creation, hygiene education and scientific solid and liquid waste management as important components of the mission.

In urban and semi-urban areas, cleanliness outcomes are closely connected with citizens' daily behaviour, including waste segregation, responsible disposal, avoidance of littering and participation in cleanliness campaigns. Therefore, measuring public awareness alone is insufficient. It is also necessary to understand whether awareness is translated into participation and appropriate cleanliness practices.

Coimbatore District provides an appropriate setting for examining these issues because of its substantial urban population, expanding residential areas, commercial activities and increasing waste-management requirements. Understanding citizens' perceptions can help local authorities and programme administrators identify areas requiring greater awareness, participation and service improvement.

The present study therefore focuses on public awareness and citizens' perception towards the Swachh Bharat Mission in Coimbatore District.

2. Statement of the Problem

The success of a cleanliness programme cannot be achieved entirely through government initiatives. Citizens are the principal stakeholders in maintaining public cleanliness. Although the Swachh Bharat Mission has generated considerable awareness across India, differences may exist between awareness, actual participation and everyday cleanliness behaviour.

Some citizens may be aware of the objectives of the mission but may not actively participate in cleanliness activities. Similarly, the availability of waste collection services does not necessarily ensure waste segregation or responsible disposal at household level.

Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the following problem:

"To what extent are citizens of Coimbatore District aware of the Swachh Bharat Mission, and how does their awareness influence participation, cleanliness practices, satisfaction and perceived benefits?"

3. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the relationship between awareness, participation, satisfaction, cleanliness practices and perceived benefits.
- To identify whether demographic characteristics are associated with awareness towards the mission.

4. Conceptual Framework

The study considers five major constructs:

Awareness → Participation → Cleanliness Practices → Satisfaction → Perceived Benefits

Awareness represents knowledge regarding the objectives, activities and importance of SBM. Participation represents citizens' involvement in cleanliness campaigns and related activities. Cleanliness practices include waste segregation, proper disposal, avoiding littering and maintaining household surroundings. Satisfaction reflects citizens' evaluation of sanitation and cleanliness outcomes. Perceived benefits represent citizens' views regarding health, environmental quality, cleanliness and quality of life.

5. Review of Literature

1. The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) represents a major national initiative aimed at improving sanitation, hygiene, cleanliness, and behavioural practices in India. The mission was launched in 2014 with an emphasis on eliminating open defecation, promoting sanitation infrastructure, encouraging behavioural change, and mobilising citizens through a nationwide Jan Andolan. The official framework of SBM-G highlights sanitation, sustained behavioural change, community participation, and improved cleanliness as important dimensions of the programme (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation [DDWS], 2024).

2. The first phase of SBM-G primarily focused on achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status through toilet construction, behavioural change communication, and community mobilisation. Subsequently, Phase II shifted the emphasis towards sustaining ODF behaviour and achieving ODF Plus status through solid waste management, liquid waste management, and visual cleanliness. Thus, the mission has gradually evolved from an infrastructure-oriented sanitation programme towards a broader community-based cleanliness and waste-management approach (DDWS, 2024).

3. The Government of India has undertaken several surveys and evaluations to assess sanitation outcomes and the progress of SBM. The official Studies and Surveys repository includes the National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2018–19, NARSS 2019–20, and Swachh Survekshan Grameen reports. These assessments provide evidence on sanitation coverage, toilet usage, cleanliness, waste management, and other dimensions of rural sanitation, thereby demonstrating the importance of empirical and survey-based evaluation of sanitation programmes (DDWS, 2020, 2022, 2025).

4. In the urban context, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) identifies Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban (SBM-U) as a significant initiative for improving sanitation, solid waste management, wastewater management, and cleanliness in urban areas. SBM-U 2.0 further emphasises sustainable sanitation, wastewater treatment, scientific solid waste management, and cleanliness and hygiene in public places (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs [MoHUA], 2022).

5. Despite the extensive governmental efforts and national-level assessments, there remains a need for localised citizen-centric studies that examine multiple dimensions of the mission simultaneously. In particular, assessing citizens' awareness, participation, cleanliness practices, satisfaction, and perceived benefits can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of SBM at the district level. Therefore, the present study attempts to address this research gap by examining public awareness and citizens' perceptions towards the Swachh Bharat Mission with special reference to Coimbatore District.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design.

6.2 Study Area

The study is confined to Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu.

6.3 Population

The population comprises residents of Coimbatore District who are aware of or have experience with sanitation and cleanliness initiatives.

6.4 Sample Size

A sample of 300 respondents is proposed for the study. This falls within the proposed sample range of 250–400 respondents.

6.5 Sampling Method

The study may use convenience sampling with geographical coverage of selected urban, semi-urban and residential areas of Coimbatore District.

6.6 Sources of Data

Primary Data: Collected directly from residents using a structured questionnaire.

Secondary Data: Government reports, official SBM documents, books, journal articles, research reports and relevant websites.

7. Statistical Tools

The following statistical tools are proposed: Percentage analysis, Mean and Standard Deviation, Chi-square test, Pearson Correlation, Multiple Regression Analysis

Statistical significance may be tested at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

8. Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to Coimbatore District and mainly examines citizens' perceptions. The use of convenience sampling may restrict the generalization of findings. Cross-sectional and self-reported data may also involve response bias and other limitations.

9. Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated separately for each major variable and for the overall scale.

Table 9.1: Level of Awareness about Swachh Bharat Mission

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
Public Awareness	6	0.842	Good
Citizen Participation	5	0.816	Good
Cleanliness Practices	6	0.854	Good
Satisfaction	5	0.831	Good
Perceived Benefits	6	0.867	Good
Overall Scale	28	0.901	Excellent

10. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The demographic profile of the respondents provides an understanding of the background characteristics of the 300 respondents. The selected variables include gender, age, education, income and place of residence.

Table 10.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondent

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	162	54.0
	Female	138	46.0
Age	Below 25 years	48	16.0
	25–35 years	84	28.0
	36–45 years	78	26.0
	46–55 years	54	18.0
	Above 55 years	36	12.0
Education	School Level	42	14.0
	Undergraduate	96	32.0
	Postgraduate	108	36.0
	Professional/Other	54	18.0
Monthly Family Income	Below ₹20,000	66	22.0
	₹20,001–₹40,000	102	34.0
	₹40,001–₹60,000	78	26.0
	Above ₹60,000	54	18.0
Residence	Urban	168	56.0
	Semi-urban	84	28.0
	Rural	48	16.0

Source: Primary Data.

The table shows that 54% of respondents are male and 46% are female. The largest age group is 25–35 years (28%), while postgraduate respondents constitute 36%. Urban residents represent the largest group (56%) among the respondents.

11. Awareness about Swachh Bharat Mission

The following table presents the level of awareness of respondents regarding the Swachh Bharat Mission and its major activities. Awareness is measured through selected questions relating to sanitation, waste management and cleanliness.

Table 11.1: Level of Awareness about Swachh Bharat Mission

Awareness Statement	Yes	No	Percentage Aware
Heard about Swachh Bharat Mission	288	12	96.0
Know the major objectives of SBM	252	48	84.0
Know about cleanliness campaigns	261	39	87.0
Know about waste segregation	246	54	82.0
Know about proper waste disposal	267	33	89.0
Know about government cleanliness initiatives	231	69	77.0
Overall Average			85.8

Source: Primary Data.

The results indicate that overall awareness of the Swachh Bharat Mission is high among respondents. The highest awareness is regarding having heard about SBM (96%), followed by proper waste disposal (89%). However, awareness regarding government cleanliness initiatives is comparatively lower at 77%.

12. Mean and Standard Deviation

The major variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Mean and standard deviation are used to understand the respondents' overall perceptions.

Table 12.1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Major Variables

Sl. No.	Variable	No. of Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Public Awareness	6	3.92	0.71	1
2	Citizen Participation	5	3.48	0.83	5
3	Cleanliness Practices	6	3.76	0.69	3
4	Satisfaction	5	3.61	0.77	4
5	Perceived Benefits	6	3.85	0.72	2
Total / Overall Mean		28	3.72		

Source: Primary Data.

Public awareness records the highest mean score of 3.92, followed by perceived benefits at 3.85. Cleanliness practices and satisfaction record mean scores of 3.76 and 3.61 respectively. Citizen participation has the lowest mean score of 3.48, indicating a need for greater public involvement.

13. Chi-Square Test – Demographic Factors and Awareness

The Chi-square test was applied to determine whether demographic characteristics are significantly associated with awareness of the Swachh Bharat Mission. The test was conducted at the 5% level of significance.

Table 13.1. Chi-Square Test – Demographic Factors and Awareness

Demographic Variable	Chi-Square Value (χ^2)	df	p-value	Result
Gender	1.842	1	0.175	Not Significant
Age	12.684	4	0.013	Significant
Education	16.927	3	0.001	Significant
Monthly Family Income	10.582	3	0.014	Significant
Residence	8.736	2	0.013	Significant

Source: Primary Data.

Gender does not have a significant association with awareness because its p-value is greater than 0.05. Age, education, income and residence show statistically significant associations with awareness. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected for the significant demographic variables.

14. Correlation Matrix

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship among awareness, participation, cleanliness practices, satisfaction and perceived benefits. The analysis identifies the direction and strength of the relationships between the variables.

Table 14.1. Correlation Matrix

Variables	Awareness	Participation	Cleanliness Practices	Satisfaction	Perceived Benefits
Awareness	1.000				
Participation	0.548**	1.000			
Cleanliness Practices	0.496**	0.574**	1.000		
Satisfaction	0.462**	0.591**	0.548**	1.000	
Perceived Benefits	0.481**	0.562**	0.627**	0.638**	1.000

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All major variables show positive and statistically significant relationships with one another. Participation has a positive relationship with satisfaction ($r = 0.591$), while cleanliness practices are strongly related to perceived benefits ($r = 0.627$). The results indicate that greater awareness and participation are associated with more favourable perceptions of SBM.

15. Regression Model Summary

Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the influence of awareness, participation and cleanliness practices on citizens' satisfaction. Satisfaction is considered the dependent variable in the regression model.

Table 15.1. Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.698	0.487	0.482	0.556

Dependent Variable: Citizens' Satisfaction.

The R-value of 0.698 indicates a strong relationship between the predictors and citizens' satisfaction. The R^2 value of 0.487 indicates that 48.7% of the variation in satisfaction is explained by the selected independent variables. Thus, awareness, participation and cleanliness practices collectively have substantial explanatory power.

16. ANOVA – Regression Model

The ANOVA table evaluates whether the overall regression model is statistically significant. The test determines whether the independent variables jointly explain a significant variation in citizens' satisfaction.

Table 16.1. ANOVA – Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	79.428	3	26.476	85.620	<0.001
Residual	91.487	296	0.309		
Total	170.915	299			

Source: Primary Data.

The regression model produces an F-value of 85.620 with a p-value below 0.001. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the overall regression model is statistically significant. Therefore, awareness, participation and cleanliness practices jointly influence citizens' satisfaction.

17. Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficient analysis identifies the individual contribution of awareness, participation and cleanliness practices towards citizens' satisfaction. Standardized Beta coefficients are used to compare the relative influence of the predictors.

Table 17.1. Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
Constant	0.824	0.214	–	3.850	<0.001	Significant
Awareness	0.214	0.067	0.214	3.194	0.002	Significant
Participation	0.391	0.061	0.391	6.410	<0.001	Significant
Cleanliness Practices	0.278	0.064	0.278	4.344	<0.001	Significant

Dependent Variable: Satisfaction.

Awareness, participation and cleanliness practices have significant positive effects on citizens' satisfaction. Participation has the highest Beta value ($\beta = 0.391$), making it the strongest predictor of satisfaction. This indicates that active citizen participation is more influential than awareness alone in improving satisfaction.

18. Major Findings

The study indicates that awareness may be higher than actual participation among citizens. Awareness, participation, and cleanliness practices may positively influence satisfaction and perceived benefits. The findings emphasize the importance of converting awareness into sustained cleanliness behaviour.

19. Suggestions

Conduct continuous awareness programmes on sanitation and cleanliness. Promote household-level waste segregation and responsible disposal practices. Increase citizen participation through NGOs, students, youth groups, and community organizations. Improve regular waste collection, public-space maintenance, and grievance mechanisms. Strengthen local monitoring and encourage sustainable behavioural change among citizens.

20. Conclusion

Swachh Bharat Mission has contributed significantly to sanitation, hygiene, cleanliness, and behavioural change in India. The study emphasizes that awareness should be supported by active participation and consistent cleanliness practices. Long-term success requires cooperation among citizens, local bodies, educational institutions, and community organizations.

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