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The Role of Higher Education in Cleanliness Awareness

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Abstract-

Sanitation as a Fundamental Right Sanitation is considered a basic human right essential for the health and well-being of communities worldwide. Despite its importance, global sanitation remains a significant public challenge because “sanitation is public.

“Impact on Development Sanitation issues primarily affect health and sustainable development, especially in low- and middle-income countries where millions lack basic facilities. This deficiency is a major hurdle in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As India aspires to be a global superpower, Mahatma Gandhi’s belief that “sanitation is more important than independence” remains vital. The Role of Higher Education The paper explores how higher education institutions can address the global sanitation crisis by: Developing skilled professionals and innovative research. Formulating policies and programs to solve complex sanitation challenges. Improving sanitation practices through community engagement and education. Conclusion While the specific role of higher education is still being explored, this research aims to identify key challenges and opportunities within these institutions. By reviewing existing literature and cases, it highlights how higher education can contribute to resolving the global crisis and providing recommendations for future research and action. Understanding this role can lead to a healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable world.

Keywords: Sanitation, Awareness, Higher Education, sustainable , development, goals.

Introduction-

Sanitation is a fundamental human right, essential for the health and well-being of communities worldwide. Consequently, this issue is receiving more attention globally today than ever before. Despite this, the global sanitation crisis remains a significant challenge because sanitation impacts public health and sustainable development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where millions lack basic health facilities. This deficiency is a major obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Today, as India moves toward becoming a global superpower, it is essential to think and move toward sanitation. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the

Nation, believed that sanitation is essential for the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and society as a whole. Highlighting the important role of sanitation in achieving social and economic development, he said, "Sanitation is more important than independence." In this way, sanitation awareness and education are vital for social, economic, political, or overall development. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Program, stated that "Sanitation is a basic human right, but it is the foundation for human dignity and better living conditions." Thus, sanitation is a critical issue affecting better living, public health, and sustainable development. Higher education can play a significant role in providing the necessary knowledge, skills, and research to improve sanitation practices and solve this issue. Higher education institutions can prepare skilled professionals, conduct innovative research, and help develop policies and programs to address the complex challenges of the sanitation crisis. Although the role of higher education in sanitation efforts is still under-explored, there is a need for more research to understand the ways in which higher education can contribute to improving sanitation practices. The purpose of this research paper is to explore the role of higher education in sanitation and to identify the major challenges and opportunities for higher education institutions in contributing to the improvement of sanitation practices. Through a review of existing literature and case studies, this paper will examine ways in which higher education can contribute to addressing the global sanitation crisis and provide recommendations for future research and action. By understanding the role of higher education in sanitation, we can all work together toward achieving sustainable hygiene and promoting a healthier, more equitable world.

Cleanliness is a very important issue in India because it is not only essential for a healthy life but also extremely crucial for India's prosperity and development. Looking at Indian society, the population is very high, and in such a situation, the lack of cleanliness can lead to the spread of various sanitation-related diseases like Dengue, Malaria, Typhoid, Chikungunya, Hepatitis, etc. This can affect our social and economic life. Therefore, following cleanliness practices is not just necessary but mandatory to avoid these diseases and provide security to society.

Current Status of Sanitation in India-

Public health and humanitarianism are key aspects of providing sanitation facilities in India. According to National Sample Survey Office (NSO) data: Historical Growth: Household toilet availability increased from 39% in 2011–12 to 59.5% in 2017–18. Recent Trends: By 2019–20, this reached 99.5% across India. Toilet Types: There has also been an increase in toilets connected to piped sewer systems or septic tanks, especially in rural areas. School Facilities: Schools have seen improvements, with 96% providing sanitation facilities by 2019–20. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Launched on October 2, 2014, to mark Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, this national campaign aims to spread the importance of cleanliness across India. Impact: More than 100 million toilets have been constructed under this mission. ODF Status: Over 600,000 villages have been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF). Challenges and Future Needs While significant progress has been made, challenges remain regarding the continued functionality and proper maintenance of these facilities. Ongoing efforts are needed to ensure that sanitation facilities in schools and rural areas are not only built but also properly used and maintained. Continued investment in infrastructure and capacity building is essential for public health and sustainable development.

The Impact of Higher Education on Cleanliness Awareness-

Higher education can have a significant impact on cleanliness awareness and public health. Statistics show that sanitation is better in areas where higher education levels

are higher. In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasized value-based education and growth in the higher education sector. High Education's Role in Cleanliness Awareness :Promoting Public Health: Educating the community about water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) to improve public health .Policy Advocacy: Higher education institutions (HEIs) can advocate for policies that prioritize health and hygiene at local and national levels. Creating a Culture of Sustainability: Engaging students to participate in activities and spread awareness for a greener campus and society.

Research-

Higher education is an essential field for research. Research in HEIs helps: Identify Root Causes: Identifying the fundamental reasons for poor sanitation and developing innovative solutions. Inform Public Policy: Research can guide public policy and improve sanitation practices. Economic Impact: Studies on the economic effects of poor sanitation can help build a case for increased investment in hygiene. Disease Prevention: Research on the link between hygiene and infectious diseases can aid in developing disease prevention strategies.

Multi-disciplinary Approach:-

Sanitation is a multi-dimensional issue that cannot be solved through a single perspective alone. A multi-disciplinary approach is essential to address the complex problems associated with sanitation, and higher education institutions can play this role effectively. This includes faculty from various fields such as public health, environmental science, engineering, and social sciences. The collaborative knowledge of all these sciences can help ensure a broad range of factors contributing to sanitation and promote multi-disciplinary solutions. In this way, higher education institutions can encourage collaboration between different disciplines to solve sanitation challenges. Higher education institutions can address this multi-dimensional problem by bringing together researchers and practitioners from various fields.

Capacity Building-

Building capacity among students is an important task for higher education. Capacity building is a process in which people's maximum potential is awakened. The role of higher education in capacity building for sanitation awareness is crucial. It enables people to understand and solve sanitation-related issues. Higher education can provide training to professionals working in the sanitation sector. It can equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to design, implement, and evaluate sanitation programs. It can also assist local communities and the government in capacity building to tackle sanitation-related challenges. Universities can develop curricula and training programs for health professionals, engineers, and policymakers working in the field of sanitation. In this way, people can be helped through capacity building and sanitation awareness.

Curriculum Development-

Higher education institutions can play an important role in sanitation awareness through curriculum development. Good curriculum development promotes creative thinking, study, and problem-solving skills and also makes people aware of other issues related to sanitation. In this way, higher education institutions can integrate the importance of sanitation practices into their curriculum and inform students about the effects of poor sanitation on public health. This can help create a culture of sanitation awareness among the next generation of professionals. For instance, public health, environmental studies, and development studies can include modules on sanitation issues and their impact on human health and the environment. Additionally, higher

education institutions can integrate sanitation into their curricula to ensure their students are equipped with the knowledge and skills related to sanitation that enable them to contribute to improvements. Such courses can create a generation of professionals who are aware of sanitation issues and can contribute to the development of sustainable sanitation programs. In this way, higher education institutions can play an important role in sanitation awareness by creating creative curriculum.

Advocacy and Policy Development-

Another important role of higher education institutions is to support appropriate policies for society and formulate new policies necessary for society. Higher education institutions have the capacity to fulfill this responsibility well. For this, higher education institutions can use their research and expertise to advocate for policies and investments that support sanitation. This includes raising awareness about sanitation issues and promoting evidence-based solutions to policymakers and civil society organizations.

Innovation in Organizations-

Hygiene and sanitation are vital for public health and sustainable development. A major challenge is that traditional sanitation solutions are often expensive and non-sustainable. Higher education institutions can address this by promoting innovation and research into low-cost, effective sanitation technologies. They can also use social media platforms to spread awareness and showcase new sanitation models.

Role of Health Education:-

Health education is a fundamental tool for hygiene awareness. It helps bridge the gap between people and health services by explaining the link between cleanliness and health. Key areas include :Knowledge of health rules, such as safe handwashing and water conservation. Encouraging healthy eating habits. Educating the community on disease prevention, reducing the need for costly medical treatments .Institutions can integrate these topics into college programs and conduct awareness campaigns to inform students and the broader community. Gender SensitivityInstitutions must cultivate gender sensitivity. Women and girls are often the most affected by poor sanitation. Higher education centers can address this by :Identifying and solving specific hygiene challenges faced by women. Designing safe, private, and accessible sanitation facilities for them. Integrating women's needs into hygiene planning and policy-making.

Advocacy for the Marginalized-

Marginalized groups often face barriers in areas like health, business, and politics. Higher education institutions should advocate for their rights, ensuring they have equal access to hygiene and education. By doing so, these institutions empower marginalized communities to understand and claim their fundamental rights.

International Cooperation:

Sanitation is not the problem of a single region or nation; it is a global issue. Therefore, international cooperation is essential to solve this problem. Higher education institutions can play an important role in this field. For instance, researchers, physicians, and policymakers from around the world can join higher education institutions to collaborate on solving sanitation challenges. Higher education institutions can foster international cooperation by partnering with universities and research institutions in other countries, participating in international networks centered on sanitation, and focusing on sanitation. In this way, by promoting international cooperation, higher education institutions can play an important role in sanitation awareness.

Community Engagement-

Just as community engagement plays a pivotal role in solving any problem, it can also play a key role in the eradication of sanitation issues. Higher education institutions can reach out to communities to understand their sanitation needs and challenges and promote the development of community-led sanitation initiatives. This can involve including community leaders and organizations in designing and implementing sanitation programs, as well as in planning and decision-making processes. Additionally, higher education institutions can create awareness regarding sanitation within the community. They can organize seminars, workshops, and awareness campaigns related to sanitation issues. Community engagement is considered essential for the eradication of any problem. In the same way, we can work toward solving this global problem of sanitation through community engagement. No other institution can perform the work of community engagement better than a higher education institution. Thus, through community engagement, higher education institutions can effectively carry out the work of sanitation awareness.

Advocacy for Environmental Sustainability-

Sanitation is directly linked to the environment and environmental sustainability. Sustainability in sanitation is necessary, and higher education institutions can play an important role in this area. For example, higher education institutions can promote environmental stability by encouraging the use of sustainable sanitation technology perspectives. This can include promoting the use of composting options, decentralized wastewater treatment systems, and other permanent sanitation solutions, as well as educating students and the wider community about the environmental impacts of sanitation. In this way, by advocating for environmental sustainability, higher education institutions can play an important role in sanitation awareness.

Cultural Sensitivity-

For sanitation awareness, gender sensitivity and cultural sensitivity are also necessary. In building cultural sensitivity, higher education institutions can play an important role. For instance, higher education institutions can work with local cultural leaders and organizations to design sanitation programs that respect and honor the cultural standards and beliefs of different communities. We can also say that higher education institutions can educate students and physicians about cultural diversity and sensitivity. This makes them more sensitive toward the rest of society and enables them to spread awareness for sanitation. Thus, higher education institutions can play an important role in creating sanitation awareness by establishing cultural sensitivity.

The role of higher education in sanitation awareness, we can say that both sanitation and awareness are essential for Indian society, and higher education can fulfill this role effectively. This is because higher education does not only provide education to its students but also makes them aware of their responsibilities toward society. Higher education institutions provide awareness education both inside and outside their campuses. Research is conducted within these institutions to find answers to various sanitation-related questions and to improve upon them. Additionally, higher education institutions utilize sanitation-related equipment and research experiments to keep their students safe. To spread sanitation awareness, higher education institutions can undertake various efforts, such as: Promoting sanitation awareness on their social media platforms. Organizing programs like cleanliness drives, special lectures, and sanitation competitions. Developing a skilled workforce. Collaborating with local communities and organizations. Promoting the importance of traditional practices. Therefore, we can conclude that higher education is fully fulfilling its role in promoting

sanitation awareness in Indian society. In conclusion, regarding sanitation, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres stated that “Sanitation means dignity, and dignity means life,” and higher education institutions are performing the task of providing this opportunity excellently.

Conclusion-

The advancement 20th century, there are still 2.4 billion people around the globe without access to adequate sanitation facilities and in india more than 80percent population is living without minimum sanitation facilities like safe drinking water, toilets, drainage connectivity and clean environment. The consequences are devastating especially on women. Where there no. toilets, girls commonly avoid school; without access to toilets women and girls must wait until it is dark to defecate, exposing themselves to harassment and sexual assault.

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