

Pick-Pocketing the Common man in the Name of Swachh Bharat

One year back P.M. Narendra Modi had grandly announced his Swachh Bharat Mission with much fanfare, the Bollywood and Cricket personalities along with some political leaders of ruling parties with the push of corporate media have exhibited the 'scenes' of Swachh Bharat mission cleaning some roads with rubbish. School-children were made instrumental to attend to these "Swachh Bharat" -a show of cleaning activities. Even Mahatma Gandhi and his aspirations about 'cleaning India' were invoked to justify the mission as well to make believe the common man that something great was going to happen to our country and to the people.

In the name of making this mission a great success the corporates were permitted to spend their CSR funds of statutory obligation for the activities of Swachh Bharat mission. Huge amounts were spent on advertisements to promote the 'ideas' of Swachh Bharat.

With much ado, the Swachh Bharat campaign concentrated on the 'uncivil' habit of Indian masses of open defecation and boasted that it would construct toilets to one and all and that it would complete its 'grand' mission of cleanliness by 2019, before the date of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth day celebrations. While making these grand announcements the P.M. had never made known that as to how this mission is going to be funded. People of this country are of the belief that the activities of this mission would be conducted with the governmental funds and the corporate CSR expenditures.

In fact maintaining cleanliness and hygienical environment is the duty of the governments and local administrations like Municipal Corporations, Municipalities and village panchayats, since they are exclusively intended to perform such tasks and are being paid with taxes to perform such duties.

However, with the touting and insistence of neo-liberal economic policies of capitalism that the state shall abandon all its responsibilities of people's welfare and people's service activities, our government implementing those anti-people policies abiding to those neo-liberal economic teachings is systematically abdicating its fundamental duties and tasks, making the people themselves to take responsibility for such welfare and service measures to be taken-up for their benefit.

Thus despite its lofty and tall proclamations and rhetoric about the 'Swachh Bharat' mission, the Modi government had cunningly transferred the responsibility and burden of fulfilling the tasks of Swachh Bharat mission on the common man in the name of imposing a so-called 'Swachh Bharat' cess @ 0.5 per cent on all services w.e.f. Nov.15(2015) onwards, to fund Swachh Bharat programmes.

In practice the already allocated funds for the sanitation are not fully being spent for the intended purpose or the allotted funds are being gobbled up by the machinery that is intended to perform the sanitation activities and programmes. In actuality these funds are being used by the ruling parties in power, to provide their political network and bases of their henchmen among masses, to create a perpetual vote bank to their ascendancy in to governmental power. Added to this these funds allotted to such sanitation schemes and programmes are being pinched by the bureaucrats and scheme implementing machinery. In all these and such schemes, the majority of the funds are being spent in the name of administration, and only a nominal amount is being spent on the actual work. Middle men are being benefited with the funds of such schemes due to lack of any sincerity and honesty with the rulers and ruling classes in implementing these schemes.

Swachh Bharat mission too is being proved to be not other-wise; and only one of such schemes.

According to the government's own National Sample survey organisation, it is revealed that despite constructing of 10 million toilets, almost half of them are not used by the beneficiaries both rural and urban.

According to a Fact checker. in report, those in many schools the toilets were badly built to the point of being usable.

Researches point out that due to lack of water and lack of proper drainage arrangements, the already built toilets are in dis-use.

In fact lack of water is the fundamental problem in more villages, rural areas and more towns that forces the people for open-defecation. Even after 68 years of the so-called independence, our rulers are unable to provide even drinking water to the majority of the villages and rural areas. Without tackling this fundamental problem how it would be wise to expect that the rural masses and of towns can maintain their toilets hygienically without availability of water even, for the usage of cleaning?

Our rulers cleverly conceal their failures and harp on lofty slogans of culture and civilizations as if it were the failures of masses.

Burdening the masses with taxes and cess indirectly by chanting lofty slogans and schemes is not a new practice in our country. Right from the British-colonials, to their present day heirs-our rulers-have been imposing such cess on common men and toiling masses and looting them.

Already we are having Education Cess, Higher education-cess, National High-road cess, Pure fuel cess etc. through which the central government is gaining an income of Rs.1,16,000crores every year. Besides this the central government and state governments are collecting water cess, worker's welfare cess and the building and other constructions' welfare cess etc. added to E.S.I.contributions. Thousands of crores of rupees are being collected through these cesses and contributions and none of these amounts are being spent for the realisation of the purpose of these cesses.The construction workers are left in a destitute condition despite huge-amounts of funds are accrued and accumulated with the government, to their supposed welfare. Such has been our experience for all these 68 yrs. The benefits as prescribed are not at all reaching the real beneficiaries.

On the other-hand despite the so-called development and advancement of technology even as on today, the despicable practice of manual scavenging is a practice in our country including in the government organizations. The conditions of the down-trodden workers-the dalits-who are forced and involved in to this work are inhuman and unacceptable. They are languishing in deplorable, unhuman conditions. But the highly touted 'Swachh Bharat' campaign, has nothing in its programmes, to bring-out the wellbeing and uplift of these socially and economically suppressed manual scavenging workers and waste pickers. More over the very recent Maharashtra government's decision to showing the posts of manual scavenging, in municipalities and panchayats, as a means of employment shows that our rulers have staunchly determined to continue manual scavenging that too with those people of down trodden classes and sections. This very fact itself exposes the hypocrisy of our rulers about their ill-class and caste-intentions hidden in their 'Swachh Bharat' proclamations.

Thus the 'SWACHH BHARAT' mission proves to be a ruse on one hand to rob the masses with indirect taxation and on the other hand to hood-wink masses in the name of civilization and cleanliness.
