

“Role Of Ayurveda And Ayush In Strengthening The Swachh Bharat Mission”

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ABSTRACT

Background: The *Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)* is one of India's most significant national initiatives to promote cleanliness, sanitation, and hygiene. While modern strategies focus on infrastructure and behavioral change, *Ayurveda* and the broader *AYUSH* system provide a holistic foundation through their emphasis on *Swasthavritta* (daily and seasonal regimens), *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, and preventive health measures. Integrating these principles can strengthen SBM by fostering sustainable lifestyle practices that ensure cleanliness at individual, family, and community levels. **Objectives:** To analyze the role of *Ayurveda* and *AYUSH* in promoting hygiene and sanitation under the framework of SBM. To identify preventive and promotive health practices from *Ayurveda* and other *AYUSH* systems that support environmental and personal cleanliness. To highlight the scope of *AYUSH*-based awareness programs and community interventions in reinforcing SBM. **Methods:** This study is a narrative review of classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, along with policy documents of the Ministry of *AYUSH* and SBM guidelines. Literature from research articles, *AYUSH* initiatives, and government reports were analyzed to assess convergence between SBM objectives and *AYUSH* health practices. **Results:** *AYUSH* interventions contribute to SBM through multiple approaches: *Ayurveda* advocates *Shaucha* (cleanliness) as an essential component of *Swasthavritta*; *Yoga* enhances discipline and community engagement; *Unani*, *Siddha*, and *Homeopathy* emphasize hygiene and immunity. Specific practices such as proper waste disposal, water purification techniques, herbal sanitation measures, and immunity-promoting regimens align with SBM goals. Moreover, *AYUSH* institutions have been active in conducting cleanliness drives, health camps, and public awareness programs. **Conclusion:** The integration of *Ayurveda* and *AYUSH* into the Swachh Bharat Mission strengthens the movement by blending traditional wisdom with modern strategies. These systems not only promote physical cleanliness but also instill holistic health, disease prevention, and sustainable community practices. Policy-level collaboration between *AYUSH* and SBM can further enhance public participation and ensure long-term success of the mission.

Keywords: Ayurveda, AYUSH, Swachh Bharat Mission, Swasthavritta, Hygiene, Public Health

INTRODUCTION

The *Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)*, launched in 2014, is a transformative movement aimed at ensuring cleanliness, sanitation, and hygiene across India. It is not just an infrastructural program for building toilets and managing waste, but a behavioral change initiative that seeks to instill cleanliness as a way of life. To make this mission sustainable, integration with cultural values and health traditions is essential. Here, *Ayurveda* and other *AYUSH* systems play a vital role by providing a holistic framework of cleanliness at physical, mental, social, and environmental levels.¹

Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of *Shaucha* (cleanliness) as a fundamental aspect of *Swasthavritta*. Daily regimens (*Dinacharya*), seasonal regimens (*Ritucharya*), and community health guidelines all highlight sanitation, proper waste disposal, and maintenance of environmental purity. Practices like water purification, herbal fumigation, and balanced diet also support hygiene and disease prevention. These teachings align with SBM's goal of creating a healthier society through clean surroundings and proper sanitation.²

The broader *AYUSH* framework, which includes Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy, further complements the vision of SBM. *Yoga* cultivates discipline, mindfulness, and collective responsibility, while Unani and Siddha emphasize preventive hygiene and immunity-building through regimens and herbal remedies. Homeopathy, with its focus on disease prevention and immunity enhancement, also contributes to maintaining community health. Together, these systems provide practical and culturally rooted ways of reinforcing cleanliness and public health.³

Government initiatives under the Ministry of AYUSH have already taken steps to integrate traditional health practices into public health campaigns. Cleanliness drives, health awareness camps, and AYUSH-based lifestyle education are being conducted across the country. By aligning SBM with AYUSH practices, the movement gains not only scientific and cultural validation but also long-term sustainability through public acceptance and participation.⁴

Thus, the role of *Ayurveda* and AYUSH in strengthening SBM goes beyond mere advocacy of cleanliness. These systems bring forward a holistic vision of health, where individual discipline, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship are interlinked. Integrating traditional health wisdom with modern sanitation measures creates a comprehensive framework for achieving the mission's ultimate goal: a clean, healthy, and sustainable India.⁵

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:

1. To analyze the role of *Ayurveda* and *AYUSH* in promoting hygiene and sanitation under the framework of SBM.
2. To identify preventive and promotive health practices from *Ayurveda* and other AYUSH systems that support environmental and personal cleanliness.
3. To highlight the scope of AYUSH-based awareness programs and community interventions in reinforcing SBM.

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

The present study is a conceptual and literary review carried out by analyzing classical Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, and other *Brihatrayi* and *Laghutrayi* sources, along with relevant Nighantus for references to *Shaucha* and *Swasthavritta*. Modern literature such as government reports, policy documents of the Ministry of AYUSH, Swachh Bharat Mission guidelines, and peer-reviewed research articles were critically reviewed. Data was collected from digital databases including PubMed, AYUSH Research Portal, and official government websites. The information was systematically compiled to identify the role of *Ayurveda* and other AYUSH systems in strengthening hygiene, sanitation, and public health measures in alignment with SBM objectives.

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION

The *Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)*, launched on 2nd October 2014, is one of India's largest national initiatives dedicated to sanitation and cleanliness. It was envisioned as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, who considered cleanliness to be as essential as independence. The mission's primary goal is to eliminate open defecation and ensure universal access to safe and sustainable sanitation facilities, thereby improving the quality of life and public health outcomes.⁷

SBM is divided into two major components: *Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)* and *Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)*. The rural component focuses on ending open defecation in villages through household toilets, community toilets, and behavioral change programs. The urban component emphasizes solid and liquid waste management, scientific disposal of garbage, and creation of public sanitation facilities in towns and cities. Together, these two wings address the diverse challenges of India's demographic and geographical settings.⁸

One of the unique features of SBM is that it does not restrict itself to infrastructure creation but also emphasizes *Jan Andolan* (people's movement). The mission highlights behavioral transformation as the key to sustainable change. Large-scale awareness campaigns, school involvement, media engagement, and community-driven activities have been integral in inspiring citizens to adopt cleanliness as a daily habit rather than an occasional activity.⁹

Health benefits are central to SBM's vision. Improved sanitation reduces the burden of communicable diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, and typhoid, which are strongly linked to poor hygiene. By promoting clean environments and safe waste disposal, SBM directly contributes to reducing child mortality and malnutrition. Additionally, it ensures the dignity and safety of women by providing household and community toilets, thereby addressing gender and social equity concerns.¹⁰

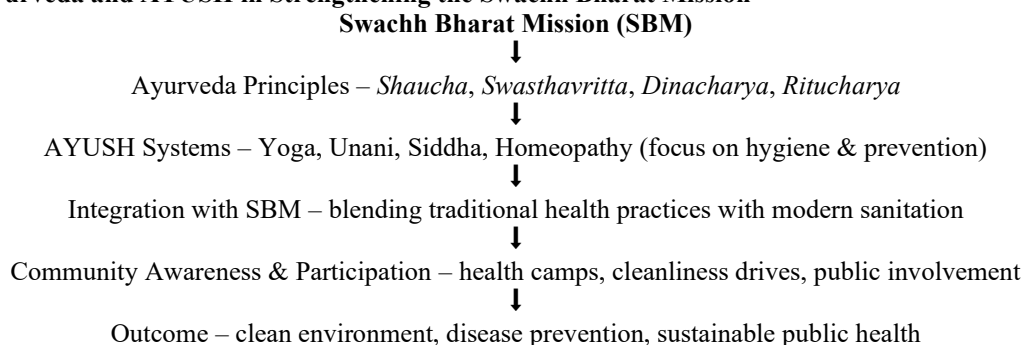
Waste management forms another vital pillar of the mission. Urban SBM initiatives encourage segregation of waste at the source, recycling, composting, and scientific management of solid and liquid waste. The promotion of eco-friendly practices such as the use of biogas, bio-toilets, and waste-to-energy plants integrates environmental sustainability into the cleanliness campaign. This aligns the mission with global climate and sustainable development goals.¹¹

Despite remarkable progress, SBM faces challenges in sustaining achievements. Maintenance of toilets, lack of adequate waste management infrastructure, and ensuring long-term behavioral change remain pressing issues. The gap between urban and rural sanitation practices, along with the cultural and economic barriers in certain regions, also poses difficulties. Addressing these challenges requires continuous innovation, community participation, and cross-sectoral collaboration.¹²

In this context, integrating traditional health systems such as *Ayurveda* and *AYUSH* into SBM offers new possibilities. *Ayurveda* emphasizes *Shaucha* (cleanliness) as a part of *Swasthavritta*, while *Yoga* cultivates discipline and collective responsibility. Practices like herbal fumigation, natural disinfectants, and sustainable lifestyles advocated by AYUSH systems complement modern sanitation measures. Their inclusion can strengthen the cultural acceptability and long-term success of SBM.¹³

In essence, the *Swachh Bharat Mission* is not merely a cleanliness drive but a comprehensive movement toward health, dignity, and sustainable living. By combining modern sanitation infrastructure with behavioral change strategies and traditional wisdom from *Ayurveda* and AYUSH, India is creating a unique model of development rooted in both tradition and modernity. The mission stands as a testimony to the power of collective action and the importance of linking cleanliness with national progress.¹⁴

“Role of Ayurveda and AYUSH in Strengthening the Swachh Bharat Mission”



RESULTS AND FINDINGS

- *Ayurveda* emphasizes *Shaucha* (cleanliness) as part of *Swasthavritta*, directly aligning with SBM goals.
- *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya* provide daily and seasonal hygienic practices that support sustainable cleanliness.
- Herbal sanitation methods (fumigation, natural disinfectants) offer eco-friendly alternatives for waste and infection control.
- *Yoga* encourages discipline, awareness, and active community participation in cleanliness drives.
- *Unani* and *Siddha* highlight preventive hygiene measures and lifestyle practices to strengthen sanitation efforts.
- Homeopathy supports disease prevention and immunity, reducing disease burden linked to poor sanitation.
- AYUSH institutions actively conduct health awareness programs, cleanliness campaigns, and community engagement activities.
- Integration of AYUSH with SBM reduces communicable diseases and enhances overall public health outcomes.
- Cultural acceptability of AYUSH practices increases community ownership and participation in SBM.
- The combined approach ensures long-term sustainability of SBM through behavioral change and traditional health wisdom.

DISCUSSION

The *Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)* has achieved remarkable progress in sanitation and hygiene, but its long-term sustainability depends on integrating behavioral, cultural, and preventive health approaches. *Ayurveda* and *AYUSH* provide a natural bridge between modern sanitation goals and India’s traditional health wisdom. The concept of *Shaucha* in *Ayurveda* goes beyond physical cleanliness to include purity of environment, food, body, and mind. This comprehensive view reinforces SBM’s objectives by linking personal hygiene with collective well-being.¹⁵

The contribution of *AYUSH* systems further strengthens SBM. *Yoga* cultivates discipline and self-awareness, fostering responsibility toward cleanliness and environment. *Unani* and *Siddha* systems emphasize daily regimens and preventive practices that align with modern hygiene principles. Homeopathy promotes immunity, helping reduce the disease burden caused by poor sanitation. By combining these systems with SBM initiatives, the program can evolve from a government-led mission into a community-driven cultural movement.¹⁶

Another significant point of discussion is the environmental sustainability promoted by AYUSH practices. Herbal fumigation, natural disinfectants, composting, and eco-friendly waste management techniques reduce dependence on chemical-based cleaning agents and harmful disposal practices. These methods are not only culturally acceptable but also cost-effective and environmentally safe, making them suitable for long-term application in both rural and urban settings.¹⁷ However, challenges remain in integrating AYUSH with SBM on a larger scale. There is a need for systematic policy-level collaboration, evidence-based validation of traditional practices, and structured awareness programs to educate communities. By addressing these challenges, the synergy between SBM and AYUSH can transform India’s sanitation landscape into a holistic model of health, hygiene, and sustainability, setting an example for the world.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

The *Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)* has emerged as a transformative program to promote sanitation, hygiene, and public health in India, but its long-term impact depends on sustainable behavioral and cultural integration. *Ayurveda* and *AYUSH* play a vital role in strengthening this mission by providing time-tested principles such as *Shaucha*, *Swasthavritta*, and preventive lifestyle practices that align with modern sanitation goals. Through daily regimens, herbal-based eco-friendly sanitation methods, and holistic community health approaches, these systems offer practical and culturally acceptable models for maintaining cleanliness. The active participation of AYUSH institutions in awareness campaigns, cleanliness drives, and health education further enhances SBM's reach and acceptance. By blending modern infrastructure with traditional wisdom, the mission not only reduces the burden of communicable diseases but also creates a sustainable framework for health, dignity, and environmental well-being.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST –NIL

SOURCE OF SUPPORT –NONE

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