

Toilet and Sanitation technology has to be affordable, sustainable and scalable: Dr RA Mashelkar

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Pune ,

Eminent scientist and Chairman of Technology Expert Committee for Drinking Water and Sanitation, Govt. of India on November 27, 2015 said that Toilet and Sanitation Technology has to be affordable and scalable, since a very large number of toilets (12 crore) that is expected to be built in a short span of time. "It is not just about 'building' toilets but it is also about 'using' toilets with focus on sustainability for many years. It is not merely toilet engineering - but it is social engineering and system engineering. The recommendations of the social innovations will lead to the mass transformation of mindsets so that socially sustainable changes will be effected in the shortest time possible.", he elaborated. Addressing over 200 toilet and sanitation technology innovators, researchers, social workers, corporate foundations' leaders and think tanks at 2nd Global Sanitation Summit, Awards and Exhibition "Sanitation for All-Toilet First" organized by IndiaCSR Group in Pune at Yashada, Dr. Mashlekar said that we should be using best and innovative technology with a focus to create affordable, scalable, easily deployable and sustainable toilet facilities for the masses. The idea of 'affordable excellence' is that our country needs to support Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. He appreciated the IndiaCSR's mission to create a high level forum brining all key stakeholders on one common platform regularly. The forum also honoured innovators who developed various affordable, innovative, sustainable toilet design, technologies and organizations for building toilets and promote advocacy to accelerate the Sanitation movement in the different part of the country. The First summit was held in national capital New Delhi on February 6, 2015. IndiaCSR believes in strategic planning, effective implementation and result-oriented procedure. The brain behind the conceptualization of the sanitation and toilet summit, Rusen Kumar, Founder and Managing Director - IndiaCSR Group said, "The forum was extremely successful. We believe that collective efforts and knowledge forums will help to gear up the Sanitation Movement in India. The summit provided forum for knowledge, experience sharing among Govt. officials, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) professionals, technology innovators, and grass root NGOs leaders, civil society and various stakeholders working in field of toilet building, sanitation, water conservation, solid waste management." In his keynote address Mashelkar emphasized on technology advancement that can play advance role in sanitation achieving the national goal on sanitation and building toilets. It has to be affordable, because our average financial resources are scarce both at national level, the state level as well as individual level." he added. Dr Mashelkar emphasized that Toilet and Sanitation technology has to be rapidly deployable, because the timelines for the completion that have been specified are very tight. Our target is to finish the task for building 12 crore toilets by the year October 2, 2015. Dr Mashelkar, who formerly headed the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) further added that Govt. has instituted a Technology Expert Committee for Drinking Water and Sanitation under his chairmanship which has 19 members with a whole range of expertise right from technology experts to social scientists to public administration to NGOs. Committee working in right earnest and has adopted a specific approach for technology selection. The rigor that is maintained in the selection of the technology is extraordinary. The criteria that are used for the selection are scalability, sustainability, affordability, rapid deployability and social acceptability. He said that right from the beginning, the Technology Expert Committee for Drinking Water and Sanitation has been trying to look at not merely incremental innovation, but disruptive innovations, which could be game changing. Therefore Committee is looking at not only 'best' practices but it is seeking the 'next' practices. This would mean not

just looking at 'less water' latrines but 'waterless' latrines and these require radical rethinking in term of design, development as well as deployment. He said, "Indeed I consider Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to be yet another freedom movement-freedom from dirt and freedom from filth. It is freedom from diseases also, because 'Swachh Bharat' is also 'Swasth Bharat. The programme is going to cost Rs. 62,000 crore. But the value to cost for the society will be very high. Indeed the cost of 'not doing it' has been indeed so high!" According to him, committee does a rigorous selection of the technology but one is mindful of the fact that the committee is set up by Central Government and the actual action is really at the level of individual state. So again there is an innovation in communication of the technologies selected by the Committee as far as the States and concerned. "I personally always like to think in terms of Indian innovation, i.e. 'Indovation'. In Delhi Ministry organizes an 'Indovation Series of two day exhibition-cum-discussion. In this series three Indovation has been held already. Indovation-4 is likely to be held in December-2015." he added. "In these events, Principal Secretaries and other concerned officials of the states, who deal with drinking water and sanitation portfolio, are invited. Also the selected technology are exhibited, where the creators of the technology as well as the suppliers of the technologies demonstrate the technologies. They make themselves available for a critical discussion with all the individuals from the different states. The final choice of the technology is left entirely to the States. Centre does not play any role in influencing their choice so that it is entirely state specific and merit-based." He said that Swachh Bharat has become Jan Andolan. He said' "I am already seeing that Swach Bharat Abhiyan is becoming a Swachh Bharat Andolan and then moving on to become Swachh Bharat Jan Andolan. There are diverse aspects of this Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. They range from public awareness to public action to social transformation. They ask for a major mind-set change among 125 crore country man." "Elimination of open defecation (EOD), eradication of manual scavenging and generation of awareness among citizens about sanitation and its linkages with public health are the prime objectives of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Movement)." he said. Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi touched a chord across the nation when he spoke from the Red Fort on 15th August, 2014. He gave a clarion call for setting up Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. By 2nd October 2019, which is the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the vision of the Swachh Bharat has to be accomplished. Construction of toilets is one aspect of the Swachh Bharat programme. The programme aims to make India 'open defecation free' by 2019. A village is declared 'open defecation free' if each household in the village has a good toilet, every member of the household has access to a toilet and there is a 100% usage of the toilet, according to the guideline issued by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS).

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