Civil Society Participation and Good Governance: A Conceptual Study of Waste Management Behaviour under Swachh Bharat Mission

Prashant Hakkapakki

Assistant professor, JSS SMI UG & PG Studies, Vidyagiri, Dharwad.

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ABSTRACT:

Good governance is possible when the active involvement of citizens involved. In India, waste management has become a major concern due to population growth, urbanisation, and changing lifestyles. To address this issue, the Government of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission in 2014 to promote cleanliness and proper waste management. However, the success of this mission depends not only on government efforts but also on the behaviour and participation of civil society. This conceptual study focuses on understanding how citizen behaviour, such as waste segregation, avoiding littering, and participating in cleanliness activities, contributes to good governance. The study is based on information collected from research articles, government reports, and other secondary sources. The study finds that when citizens are aware, responsible, and actively involved, waste management systems function more effectively. Civil society helps in improving accountability, transparency, and overall governance outcomes. The study concludes that government policies alone cannot achieve the desired results unless they are supported by positive behavioural changes among citizens. Therefore, civil society participation plays an important role in achieving the objectives of the Swachh Bharat Mission and ensuring good governance in waste management.

KEYWORDS:

Civil Society, Good Governance, Waste Management, Swachh Bharat Mission, Civic Responsibility.

1. Introduction:

Good governance is a fundamental requirement for sustainable development in any democratic nation. It emphasizes participation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and effectiveness in public administration. In recent years, the role of civil society has become increasingly significant in ensuring good governance, particularly in areas such as environmental sustainability and waste management.

India faces a major challenge in managing its rapidly increasing solid waste due to urbanization, population growth, and changing consumption patterns. According to the Central Pollution Control Board, India generates millions of tonnes of municipal solid waste annually, much of which is not scientifically processed. Recognizing the seriousness of the issue, the Government of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in 2014 to promote cleanliness, sanitation, and proper waste management practices.

However, effective waste management is not solely dependent on government infrastructure but also on civilian behaviour. Practices such as waste segregation, avoiding littering, and participating in community cleanliness initiatives reflect the level of civic responsibility. Civil society, including citizens, NGOs, and community groups, plays a vital role in supporting government initiatives and ensuring governance effectiveness. Thus, understanding the behavioural dimension of civil society in waste management is essential to achieving the broader goals of good governance.

2. Need for the Study:

Despite various government initiatives, improper waste disposal and lack of segregation continue to persist in many parts of India. This indicates a gap between policy formulation and behavioural implementation. While significant attention has been given to infrastructure development under the Swachh Bharat Mission, comparatively less emphasis has been placed on understanding the role of civil society behaviour in ensuring its success.

This study is important to highlight the behavioural aspects of waste governance and to emphasize that sustainable waste management requires not only administrative action but also collective social responsibility.

3. Objectives of the Study:

- To understand the role of civil society in promoting good governance in waste management.
- To examine the importance of civilian behavioural change in achieving the objectives of Swachh Bharat Mission.
- To analyse the relationship between civic responsibility and effective waste management.

4. Review of Literature:

Several studies have examined the relationship between civil society participation, waste management, and governance.

Joshi and Ahmed (2016) studied the implementation and challenges of the Swachh Bharat Mission in India. The study highlighted that the mission mainly focuses on improving sanitation and cleanliness through both infrastructure development and behavioural change. The authors emphasized that government efforts alone are not sufficient to achieve cleanliness unless citizens actively participate. They found that lack of awareness, social habits, and public attitude are major barriers to effective waste management. The study concluded that behavioural change among citizens is essential for the long–term success of sanitation programmes.

Gupta, Klemes, and Varbanov (2015) examined the condition of solid waste management in India and identified several challenges such as improper waste disposal, lack of segregation, and poor public cooperation. The study observed that rapid urbanization has increased waste generation, but public participation in waste management remains low. The authors stressed that citizen involvement and awareness are necessary for improving waste management systems and achieving sustainability.

Srivastava and Srivastava (2020) analysed the role of citizen participation in urban waste management. The study found that when citizens actively cooperate with municipal authorities, waste collection and disposal become more efficient. It also noted that public participation increases accountability and transparency in governance. The authors concluded that civil society plays a key role in improving the effectiveness of waste management policies.

Marshall and Farahbakhsh (2013) discussed the importance of community participation in environmental governance. The study explained that environmental problems like waste management cannot be solved

only through government action. It requires cooperation from citizens and local communities. The authors emphasized that civil society helps in improving transparency, efficiency, and sustainability in governance.

Guerrero, Maas, and Hogland (2013) conducted a study on waste management practices across different countries and found that citizen behaviour is one of the most important factors influencing waste management success. The study highlighted that waste segregation at source depends mainly on public awareness and responsibility. The authors concluded that without active citizen participation, waste management systems cannot function effectively.

Gupta and Arora (2020) examined the behavioural aspects of the Swachh Bharat Mission and found that public awareness and social responsibility have improved after the launch of the mission. However, the study also observed that behavioural change is still slow in many areas. The authors suggested that continuous awareness programmes are necessary to ensure long–term success.

Mohan (2019) studied the role of civil society in governance and found that civil society organizations act as a link between government and citizens. The study explained that civil society promotes accountability, transparency, and public participation. It concluded that active civil society is essential for achieving good governance.

These studies collectively indicate that civil society participation and behavioural change are essential for effective waste management and good governance.

5. Research Methodology:

This study is conceptual in nature and is based entirely on secondary data.

Secondary data has been collected from:

Research journals, Government reports, Swachh Bharat Mission publications, Academic articles and Official websites

The study uses descriptive and analytical methods to examine the relationship between civil society behaviour and good governance in waste management.

Conceptual overview

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Urban 2.0, Ministry of

Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), and related reports, the waste management landscape in India has seen significant improvements, with daily municipal waste processing increasing from 18% in 2014 to 80% by 2024.

The following data is available in respect of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

Key Waste Generation & Processing Stats (SBM–Urban)

- Daily Waste Generation: Approx. 1,61,919 Tonnes Per Day (TPD) as of 2024.
- Waste Processing Rate: ~80% of generated waste is processed (2024).
- Legacy Waste: Focus is on remediating existing dumpsites into green zones.
- Source Segregation: Over 95% of wards achieve door–to–door collection, with significant strides in source segregation.
- Waste Composition: Municipal solid waste consists of roughly 50–60% organic material.

SBM–U 2.0 Targets and Allocations

- Budgetary Allocation: ₹10,168 Crore has been allocated to States/UTs under SBM–U 2.0 (launched Oct 1, 2021) for Solid Waste Management.
- Goal: To make urban India "Garbage Free" and ensure 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste.
- Treatment Capacity: The total proposed waste treatment capacity under SBM–U 2.0 aims to cover 100% of generated waste.

Key Performance Indicators (Urban)

- Source Segregation (Wards): 78% (as of Dec 2020).
- Door–to–Door Collection (Wards): 97% (as of Dec 2020).
- Processing Efficiency: Increased from 18% in 2014 to over 75% in 2023.

Sector–Specific Waste Data

- Sanitary Waste: Approximately 12 billion sanitary napkins are generated annually.
- Plastic Waste: India generates nearly 3.5 million metric tons of plastic

waste annually.

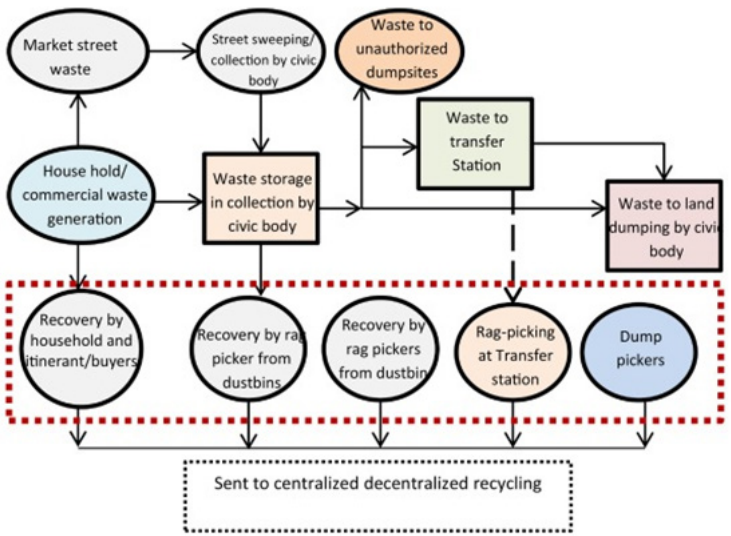
- Electronic Waste: E–waste generated in 2022 exceeded 1.6 million metric tons.
- Recycling Rate (Plastic): Roughly 20% of plastic waste is recycled.

Rural Sanitation (SBM–Gramin)

- ODF Plus Villages: Over 5,68,452 villages have achieved ODF Plus status as of late 2023.
- Total ODF Status: 35 states/UTs, 699 districts, and over 5.99 lakh villages were declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) by Sept 2019.
- Impact: 11.25 times less likely to have groundwater contamination in ODF villages compared to non–ODF.

Regional and City–Level Data

- Top Producer: Maharashtra is the largest Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) producing state, with over 22,500 metric tons per day (2021).
- Waste Generation Projection: Predicted to reach 260–300 million tonnes per day by 2047.



Source: CPCB INDIA

Current status of the solid waste implied that the average amount of solid waste generated per capita compared to the world is much lower but the highly–dense population, makes it a severe problem. The composition of the Indian solid waste mostly contains the organic substance with high moisture while other developed countries majorly generate packing waste such as paper, cardboard, plastic etc. with low moisture contents. While comparing in the Indian states and regions, waste generation pattern also varies along with quantity, quality, and typology. The high moisture content and low calorific value are mostly found common in most of the cities and states. There is a significant disparity of available resources/budget, adoption of the strategies, and planning approaches among them and which also differs from the available land, size of the required recycling and processing facilities.

6. Findings:

Based on the review of literature and conceptual analysis, the following findings are observed:

- Civil society plays a crucial role in ensuring effective waste management.
- Behavioural change among citizens is essential for the success of Swachh Bharat Mission.
- Good governance depends not only on government action but also on citizen participation.
- Awareness and education improve waste management practices.
- Community participation increases accountability and transparency.

7. Suggestions:

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are made:

- Government should focus more on behavioural awareness programmes.
- Environmental education should be included in academic curriculum.
- Citizens should be encouraged to practice waste segregation.
- NGOs and community groups should actively participate in waste management programmes.
- Government should introduce incentive schemes for responsible waste behaviour.
- Strict penalties should be imposed for improper waste disposal.

8. Conclusion:

Waste management has become a major governance challenge in India. The Swachh Bharat Mission has made significant progress in improving sanitation and cleanliness. However, the success of such initiatives depends largely on the behaviour and participation of civil society.

This study concludes that civil society plays an important role in promoting good governance in waste management. Behavioural change, civic responsibility, and community participation are essential for achieving sustainable waste management. Therefore, good governance can only be achieved when citizens and government work together.

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Conflict of interest:

The Authors have no conflict of interest to declare that they are relevant to the content of this article.