

# Swachh Bharat Mission and the Political Economy of State Welfare: Towards a Critical Appraisal

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## Abstract

*The Swachh Bharat Mission in India is conceived as a project to integrate the public and private sphere into a national political campaign. This project is different because it creates a public perception of the 'hygiene' of nationhood. Swachh Bharat Mission was introduced as a nationwide project to eradicate open defecation. It is indeed the only project that got wider political support in the country, and the government and prime minister declared it a collective effort with state patronage. It has both rural and urban components and its introduced new institutional mechanism in development governance. This project indirectly puts the onus on the vulnerable community to lead nation-building without any proper assessment of per capita availability of facilities at the periphery and social reasons to bypass personal hygiene. India's 'poor neighborhood' is considered unfit to integrate into 'nationhood'. Swachh Bharat Mission combined the idea of nation, nationhood, and purity. The critical aspect of the scheme is its institutional capability to endorse the caste system and caste-based labour in Indian society.*

**Keywords:** Swachh Bharat, Welfare, Caste, Scavenging, Sanitation

## Introduction

Ambedkar's idea of Annihilation of caste was evolved out of the historical subjugation of Indians based on caste and caste-based occupations. Caste excludes people from the institutions of well-being and takes away the autonomy from individual's ability on herself. Caste-based occupation is one of the critical aspects of the Indian social system which restricts the occupational mobility of millions. Some scholars argue that the caste system exists in India's market economy and practices in labour market. Dalits are being discriminated against not by caste in the market economy but by the very economical process of market discrimination (Mosse, 2020). Also, in the period of economic reforms, caste-based occupations are operating, lower caste jobs with poor income continue in the era of economic diversification (Das, 2013). Still, some scholars believe in market capitalism and often articulate that capitalism will destroy the caste

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