



Open defecation continues unabated

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'Open defecation levels are still above 40% in ODF States; Swachh Bharat has not brought behavioural change'

- New research on the impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission in the rural parts of four northern States shows that while open defecation has fallen and toilet ownership has increased, the percentage of people who owned toilets but continued to defecate in the open has remained unchanged between 2014 and 2018.
- This indicates that the Mission has been more successful at toilet construction than at driving behaviour change, according to the authors of the study, being released by the Research Institute for Compassionate Economics (RICE) and the Accountability Initiative of the Centre for Policy Research.
- According to the Mission, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are already open defecation free or ODF states.
- Bihar has achieved 98.97% coverage of toilets for every household, while Uttar Pradesh has achieved 100%, according to government data, although the state has yet to be declared ODF.
- One major statistic, however, has remained unchanged since 2014: the fraction of people who own a toilet, but who nevertheless defecate in the open remains at about 23%.

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