



## SIGNIFICANCE OF SANITATION FACILITIES AND ISSUES RELATED TO IT AT PILGRIMAGE CENTERS, A CASE STUDY OF PANDHARPUR

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*Abstract: pilgrims are important part of pilgrimage centers. Better infrastructure facilities at pilgrimage centers attract a greater number of pilgrims. Satisfactory sanitation facilities are the important part of pilgrimage centers. In Maharashtra pandharpur is mostly visited pilgrimage center. Pandharpur is famous for lord Vitthal. Every year near about 20-25 lakh pilgrims visit pandharpur, and it is observed that number of pilgrims increasing every year. For this largely visited pilgrimage center, providing satisfactory sanitation facilities is task. There are many sanitation facilities are provided but some of them are not in good condition hence pilgrims choose to defecate in open. It leads to spreading of diseases. If better sanitation facilities were provided it will help to maintain hygienic environment throughout the wari period. The findings of the revealed that increasing flow of pilgrims choose to defecate in open due to unsatisfactory sanitation facility and it leads to polluted environmental condition and spread of diseases. Hence, it is very significant to provide sanitation facility at pilgrimage center.*

**Index Terms - sanitation facilities, public toilets, pilgrims, pilgrimage center.**

### I. INTRODUCTION

Due to its important deliverables, which include employment, national integration, and foreign exchange revenues, pilgrimage tourism has significantly increased in popularity and attention in India. (Hole, 2019) A pilgrimage is an excursion to a temple, shrine, or other site that has special meaning for the travelers' respective religions and worldviews. It may also be connected to religious travel. It has been recorded in the business year 2017 that the government of India earned around 51,587 INR through Foreign exchange earnings due to pilgrimage tourism (Reader, 2015).

Public toilets play an important role in economic wealth of that city. For every people access to a clean and hygienic public toilet is important. Lack of such type of facilities in the public area leads to other problems like open defecation. Because of open defecation unhygienic conditions spread over the city (Corporation, 2016).

In India public toilet condition is very poor. Peoples avoid to use of those toilets. India was among the world's poorest nations in 2012 according to a variety of major health issues. India's extreme poverty comes with serious health concerns brought on by poor sanitation. After Swatchha Bharat Abhiyan the condition of open defecation remains unchanged (Mahendrapratap & Gupta, 2015). One of the oldest types of tourism and a worldwide phenomenon of religious history, it can be differentiated into various forms. The short-term religious tourism is distinguished by excursions to nearby pilgrimage centers or religious conferences. The long-term describes visits of several days or weeks to national and international pilgrimage sites or conferences. (Vijayanand, 2012). One regularly hears claims that tourism supports X jobs in an area or that a festival or special event generated Y million dollars in sales or income in a community (S.Vijayanand, 2012).

### II. Background

There are many pilgrimages center in India where the public visits in lakhs and probably in crores also like Jagannath puri, Nashik, pandharpur. It is also one of the most important pilgrimage destinations of devotees from all over India. While maximum pilgrims visit during four 'wari' periods like Aashadhi Yatra, Kartik Yatra, Maghi Yatra, and Chaitri Yatra. Pandharpur is important religious place where around 10-15 lakhs pilgrims visit pandharpur during Aashadhi wari in month July every year. It is also known as Dakshin Kashi of India. Pandharpur has situated 72 km from Solapur district Maharashtra. Pandharpur has a great historic and religious background. It is an important pilgrimage town in India. The mythological relevance and importance of Vitthal. Vitthal is not the god of only warkari culture in Maharashtra but is the god of many Vaishnava it's from places like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, etc.(Samity, n.d.). In pandharpur, different sanitation facilities are there but condition of many of them is poor which leads to public health in danger (Foundation, 2009).

### III. Relevance

For healthy leaving conditions of any town and city toilet facilities are one of the important features due to increased floating population. Because of non-availability good toilet facility people use surrounding for conducting their toilet activities.

In many towns and villages, they still don't have toilets in their residential units and government announced some schemes. However, this facility is not extended in common public. In the places where peoples come from for short duration for wari, they don't have their own sanitation facilities at their homes and hence they are compelling to use the surrounding area for toilet. It is awkward situations for females as they have their own limitations. If these facilities not provided by civic authority, pilgrims choose to open in defecation. Considering these points, public toilet become a very vibrant issue.

Pandharpur is town with population 98,923. During Aashadhi wari town can't accommodate the large number of visitors and there is difficult task to provide public toilets as number of pilgrims increases per year, it is observed by official government data and Nagarpalica has its own limitations they provide public toilet facility. But these public toilet facilities are not properly managed and not with satisfying sanitation facilities. The provided public toilets are not evenly distributed according to geographic location. Constructed Sulabh Souchalay buildings are two storied as compared number of aged people are more than youth during wari hence they could not travel that much for their toilet (Loksatta, 2018).

Considering all above issues, the study aims to identify significance of sanitation facilities for pilgrimage center pandharpur.

### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

This report was taken for Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB). Pandharpur has been selected as one of the places from Maharashtra for the program "Environmental Improvement Programme at Religious Places in Maharashtra". And the study of issues is taken by Ecosan Services Foundation (ESF), Pune. The report states that the number of the flow of pilgrims at wari and Ekadashi. And it also states that more public toilets are required as visiting pilgrims are increasing every year. Also, a detailed study on the condition of sewer management of town and by studying all factors report gives recommendations for to develop a plan for water supply and sanitation management. Appropriately design for sanitation management mostly during the wari period (Foundation, 2009).

The reporter was focused on condition of conservancy workers durin aashadi wari period. Workers use 10-12 buckets of water to wash toilets. Even provision of all cleaning equipments like brushes, phenyl after cleaning stench stay with them. A vehicle come to vaccum out the accumulated faces. During desludging bad odour spread in surrounding environment. This unbearable odour gives headache to surrounding pilgrims and workers. During rain water come out from toilets and forms puddles in front of their tents. And all this conditions creat unhyginic enviroment (Modak & Sadaf, 2017).

Clean public toilets are rarely found in India. Broken floors, leaking slabs, not adequate water, broken door frames are common issues faced by the public during the use of public toilets and hence people avoid using the public toilet.

As resulting swaccha Bharat mission has its own drawbacks. Malodour is another problem. From above it is suggested to built odorless low-cost solution that could either be installed in the washroom (Jain & Ashish, 2020).

### V. Aim and Objectives

#### Aim

To study and identify the significance of the sanitation facility and issues related to pilgrim center.

#### Objectives

To analyze the issues associated with sanitation conditions with pilgrimage center at pandharpur.

To explore the needs and benefits associated with sanitation in the field of pilgrimage center pandharpur

To offer significant solutions for the enhancement of sanitation condition at pandharpur.

### Details of pandharpur and pilgrim's visiting details

Pandharpur town in Solapur district, Maharashtra is famous for ancient temple of 'Lord Vithhal'. The temple town, which is a 'D' class Municipal Corporation with about 1.0 Lakh population, is also one of the most important pilgrimage destinations of devotees from all over India. The town is placed on the bank of Bhima River. Thousands of pilgrims visit Pandharpur city daily for Vithhal darshan. Pilgrims in large numbers beyond the residential population visit during the four "wari" periods; namely, Aashadhi, Kartiki, Maghi and Chaitri. Following data represents number of pilgrims visit pandharpur throughout the year .

*Table 1pilgrims visiting data through the year*

| Month          | Jan-Feb  | March-Apr | Jul-Aug    | Oct-Nov    |
|----------------|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| No of pilgrims | 3-5 lack | 3-5 lack  | 10-15 lack | 10-15 lack |

(Source: Pandharpur Municipal report)

### Existing Sanitation Condition

There is total 3700 number of toilets from which 2200 are permanent structure and 1500 are temporary. Permanent toilets are placed at different locations from which 9 are under Swatchha Bharat mission G+2 buildings. And temporary toilets are placed at locations, more than 600 toilets are placed at 65 acers, valvanta and wakhari tal.



Figure 1 Interior of existing toilets  
(Source: primary source)



Figure 2 Exterior of public toilet  
(Source: primary source)



Figure 3 Temporary toilets at valvant (during day)  
(Source: municipal report 2019)



Figure 4 Temporary toilets (during night)

(Source: municipal report 2019)

Existing toilets are not in good condition and Sulabh toilets are G+2, pilgrims who visit pandharpur are most in 50-70 age groups so they are unable to climb for first floor and cannot wait for too long if ground floor is fully occupied, so they choose to defecate in open.

Temporary toilets are taken on rental basis for 10-15 days during wari periods. All these toilets are 4'x4'x7' and 200liter sludge tank. Desludging takes place throughout the day.

But because of no water supply in the toilet, they need to carry water from outside. while carrying water floor get wet. Surrounding of public toilet get muddy and unhygienic. Also, there is no separate entries for male and female.

## VI. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

From above study it is observed that pandharpur needs better sanitation facilities for pilgrims. Existing sanitation facilities are not satisfactory, because of those pilgrims choose to defecate in open. open defecation creates unhygienic condition and spread diseases. By giving better sanitation facilities, it will reduce open defecation. Better sanitation facility is sign of better health as well as wealth of that town. As pandharpur is very famous pilgrimage center in Maharashtra, near about 10-15 lakh pilgrims visit pandharpur during Aashadhi wari period. number of pilgrims increasing every year hence need of sanitation facilities also increasing.

Providing sufficient water supply, better infrastructure facility, security at public toilet will increase pilgrim flow. As permanent toilets are only having infrastructure and insufficient water issues which will minimized by giving better options and solving them. Because of water carrying system in temporary toilets surrounding environment creates unhealthy condition So, there is need to provide better solution for temporary toilets. Sufficient water supply, cleanliness and women safety are main factors for temporary toilets.

To provide sufficient water supply and cleanliness of toilet provision of water must be on cubical of toilet. Two to four times daily desludging were not convenient due to heavy flow of pilgrims. Hence capacity of tanks must be larger than previous one. Special designs for physically handicap persons. For female user privacy is important, need of one room for lactation and changing as availability of space at different locations.

As number of pilgrims huge and increasing every year, number of better sanitation facilities need to be increased if sustainable facilities were introduced it will help to decrease environmental degradation and revenue will generated through sustainable model.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

From the result of the study, it is clear that sanitation facilities at pilgrimage center is very important. Better sanitation facility of any town increase health as well as wealth of that town. Among other observations, it has shown that at pandharpur town need of satisfactory sanitation facilities area required. Existing situation of public toilet is very poor hence pilgrims avoid to use that public toilet and defecates in open. some public toilets are G+2 structures as more pilgrims are aged, they cannot control and travel for toilet therefore they choose to defecate in open near that building. By providing better sanitation facilities for pilgrims, it will reduce open defecation and control on spread of diseases.

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