

Toilet: Ek Prem Katha is a 2017 Indian Hindi-language comedy-drama film. The film is a satirical comedy in support of governmental campaigns to improve sanitation conditions in India, with an emphasis on the eradication of open defecation, especially in rural areas.

The film highlights India's toilet problem, which is caused by their cultural and religious sentiments. In Indian rural areas, people still do not have this basic necessity, which frustrates women which further leads to sexual harassment.

This movie leads us to the topic of open defecation. Open defecation is the human practice of defecating outside ("in the open") rather than into a toilet. People may choose fields, bushes, forests, ditches, streets, canals, or other open spaces for defecation. They do so either because they do not have a toilet readily accessible or due to traditional cultural practices.] The practice is common where sanitation infrastructure and services are not available. Even if toilets are available, behavior change efforts may still be needed to promote the use of toilets. 'Open defecation free' (ODF) is a term used to describe communities that have shifted to using toilets instead of open defecation. This can happen, for example, after community-led total sanitation programs have been implemented.

Open defecation can pollute the environment and cause health problems. High levels of open defecation are linked to high child mortality, poor nutrition, poverty, and large disparities between rich and poor. Ending open defecation is an indicator being used to measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal Number 6. Extreme poverty and lack of sanitation are statistically linked. Therefore, eliminating open defecation is thought to be an important part of the effort to eliminate poverty.

Defecating in the open is a very ancient practice. In ancient times, there were more open spaces and less population pressure on land. It was believed that defecating in the open causes little harm when done in areas with low population, forests, or camping type situations. With development and urbanization, open defecating started becoming a challenge and thereby an important public health issue, and an issue of human dignity. With the increase in population in smaller areas, such as cities and towns, more attention was given to hygiene and health. As a result, there was an increase in global attention towards reducing the practice of open defecation.

Open defecation perpetuates the vicious cycle of disease and poverty and is widely regarded as an affront to personal dignity. The countries where open defecation is most widely practiced have the highest numbers of deaths of children under the age of five, as well as high levels of undernutrition, high levels of poverty, and large disparities between the rich and poor.

The reasons for open defecation are varied. It can be a voluntary, semi-voluntary, or involuntary choice. Most of the time, a lack of access to a toilet is the reason. However, in some places, even people with toilets in their houses prefer to defecate in the open.

## **A few broad factors that result in the practice of open defecation are listed below.**

- Lack of infrastructure: People often lack toilets in their houses, or in the areas where they live.
- Lack of toilets in other places: Lack of toilets in places away from people's houses, such as in schools or in the farms leads the people to defecate in the open. Another example is the lack of public toilets in cities, which can be a big problem for homeless people. Use of toilets for other purposes: In some rural communities, toilets are used for other purposes, such as storing household items, animals, farm products, or used as kitchens. In such cases, people go outside to defecate.
- Lack of awareness: People in some communities do not know about the benefits of using toilets.
- Lack of behavior change: Some communities have toilets, yet people prefer to defecate in the open. In some cases, these toilets are provided by the government or other organizations and the people do not like them, or do not value them. They continue to defecate in the open. Also, older people are often found to defecate in the open and they are hesitant to change their behavior and go inside a closed toilet.
- Prefer being in nature: This happens mostly in less populated or rural areas, where people walk outside early in the morning and go to defecate in the fields or bushes. They prefer to be in nature and the fresh air; instead of defecating in a closed space such as a toilet. There may be a cultural or habitual preference for defecating "in the open air", beside a local river or stream, or even the bush.
- Combining open defecation with other activities: Some people walk early in the morning to look after their farms. Some consider it as a social activity, especially women who like to take some time to go out of their homes. While on their way to the fields for open defecation they can talk to other women and take care of their animals.
- Social norms: Open defecation is a part of people's life and daily habits in some regions (e.g. in some rural regions of India). It is an ancient practice and is hard for many people to stop practicing. It is a part of a routine or social norm. In some cultures, there may be social taboos where a father-in-law may not use the same toilet as a daughter-in-law in the same household.
- Social or personal preferences: Open defecation is a preferred practice in some parts of the world, notably in rural India, with many respondents in a survey from 2015 stating that "open defecation was more pleasurable and desirable than latrine use".
- Fecal incontinence: This medical condition can result in abrupt 'emergencies' and not enough time to access a toilet.

## **India**

Open defecation is a large problem in India, affecting about 50 million people. Many factors contribute to this, ranging from poverty to and government corruption. Domestic and foreign agencies have studied these factors in order to better figure out how to deal with these problems and tackle the root causes that hamper progress in sanitation. About 550 million people were affected by lack of access to adequate toilets in 2014 but, since then, through Swachh Bharat, a program managed by the Indian government in conjunction with UNICEF, India has reduced the number of people without access to toilets to about 50 million.

## **Safety of women**

There are strong gender impacts connected with open defecation. The lack of safe, private toilets makes women and girls vulnerable to violence and is an impediment to girls' education. Women are at risk of sexual molestation and rape as they search for places for open defecation that are secluded and private, often during hours of darkness. Lack of privacy has an especially large effect on the safety and sense of dignity of women and girls in developing countries. They face the shame of having to defecate in public so often wait until nightfall to relieve themselves. They risk being attacked after dark, though it means painfully holding their bladder and bowels all day. Women in developing countries increasingly express fear of assault or rape when having to leave the house after dark. Reports of attacks or harassment near or in toilet facilities, as well as near or in areas where women defecate openly, are common.

## **Conclusion**

All of these points taken into consideration are the reason India as a developing nation still has open defecation. Although through governmental norms we are able to cope with this. We are bringing awareness to rural areas against open defecation with norms on how to use them. With this, there are multiple funds being leased to rural areas from the government, taking this into consideration we can be sure that we can slowly but surely ease away from open defecation with overall development too.