

RIGHT TO SANITATION CAMPAIGN IN INDIA



Subject: Invitation for All India Convention on “Right to Sanitation” on 24th- 25th March, New Delhi

Dear Friend,

We, in the Right to Sanitation (RtS) Campaign in India, are happy to invite you to participate in the All India Convention on “Right to Sanitation” and provide your valuable insights on the issue. The convention is being organized on **24th-25th March, 2014**, at **Speaker’s Hall, Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi**. Please refer to the detailed schedule of the convention given at the end of this invitation letter.

During the last one year, the RtS Campaign in India has emerged as a common platform of organisations and individuals sharing a common dream of an India having hygienic sanitation for all its people without any discrimination or exclusion.

Though this subject has been generally overlooked in most development and human rights debates, the sanitation crisis in India is more than an emergency. About 57 per cent (626 million) of the 1.1 billion people in the world who practice open defecation are found in India. According to Census 2011, the national sanitation coverage is 46.9% whereas rural sanitation coverage is just 30.7%. For the marginalised, like the rural Dalits (23%) and rural Adivasis (16%), the figures are much lower. Out of 6 million villages in the country, only 25,000 (only 4%) are said to be free from the practice of open defecation (Nirmal Gram villages).

The Government’s own census report of 2011 admits that 22.39% (or over 3.75 crores) of toilets allegedly built through various government schemes at individual household levels are missing, i.e. they do not exist in actuality. Another report points out the disparities of sanitation coverage among different wealth quintiles. The poorest 40% of the population have barely benefitted from gains in sanitation and the poor people are over 13 times less likely to have access to sanitation than rich people. Sanitation & hygiene directly affect the health, economy, education and general well-being of a nation. Persons with disability, women, girls and socially excluded communities such as Dalits, Adivasis and minorities are the worst sufferers of this neglect too.

As India goes into electing its new parliament and its new leaders in the near future and the people in India are discussing its great democracy, the RtS Campaign in India invites you to discuss the sanitation crisis and the need to recognize sanitation as a basic human and democratic right needing a clear constitutional mandate to become a legally enforceable right. All political parties and their candidates need to take a clear stand on “Right to Sanitation” and social organisations and individuals need to strengthen the peoples’ voices for it.

The RtS campaign has prepared a draft position paper on ‘Right to Sanitation’. It is attached herewith for your reference.

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The convention is being organised with limited financial resources and we would very much like if you can take care of your travel costs and accommodation. In case you need any support please let us know. The Campaign would be able to provide travel support and modest accommodation to a small number of participants on a first-come-first-served basis.

Kindly confirm your participation at the earliest to help us in arranging the logistics.

We look forward to your participation in the convention.

In solidarity,

On behalf of RtS Campaign in India

National Campaign Coordination Team (NCCT-RtS)

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**Schedule of
National Convention on “Right to Sanitation”
Organized by
Right to Sanitation Campaign in India
On 24th-25th March, 2014
At Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi**

| Time | Subject |
|--|--|
| Day I -- 24th March | |
| 9.30 AM – 10.00 AM | Registration |
| Part I | Understanding the General Sanitation Situation |
| 10.00 AM – 10.15AM | Welcome and introduction to the Convention |
| 10.15 AM – 10.45 AM | Right to Sanitation Campaign in India: an overview of the past one year (Presentation of the annual report & lessons) |
| 10.45 AM – 11.45 AM | Sanitation : Concept & Linkages |
| 11.45 AM – 12.05 PM | Tea Break |
| 12.05 AM – 1.30 PM | Sanitation Crisis in India : Challenges and (GO/NGO) Efforts |
| 1.30 PM -- 2.15 PM | Lunch Break |
| Part II | Sanitation and Excluded Communities |
| 2.15 PM -- 3.45 PM | Sanitation issues in the context of Dalits, manual scavengers, Adivasis (SCs/STs), minorities and Disabled |
| 3.45 PM – 4.05 PM | Tea Break |
| 4.05 PM – 5.30 PM | Sanitation issues in the context of Women, Children, aged and urban poor/homeless |
| 5.30 PM – 6.00 PM | Recap of the Day |
| Day II -- 25th March | |
| Part III | Consolidating the thinking and action for “Right to Sanitation” |
| 9.30 AM – 10.30 AM | Need for “Right to Sanitation” in Indian Constitution : Linkages with other existing provisions |
| 10.30 AM – 11.30 AM | Strategies for a stronger people’s voice on “Right to Sanitation” |
| 11.30 AM – 11.50 AM | Tea Break |
| 11.50 AM – 12.45 PM | Linkages with other campaigns – Nationally, Regionally, Globally (including Post 2015 Agenda) |
| 12.45 PM – 1.30 PM | National Declaration on “Right to Sanitation” and submission of demands to representatives of political parties |
| 1.30 PM – 1.45 PM | Conclusion and Vote of thanks |
| 1.45 PM – 2.30 PM | Lunch Break |
| Part IV | Act Now |
| 2.30 PM – 3.45 PM | a. Different delegations from the convention visit different ministries and representatives of political parties with declaration and demands b. Other participants discuss in their state-level groups on immediate future action in their respective states |