

SDMC's Order

Why in news?

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South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) made it mandatory for all hotels and restaurants in its jurisdiction to give full access to the general public to their toilet facilities.

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What the order has said?

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- The move is part of a **soon-to-be national campaign** to make more toilet facilities available to the public, with special focus on women and children.

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- The broad ideas are hygiene and security.

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- The suggestion came from Delhi Lieutenant Governor who urged SDMC to explore the possibility.

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- Restaurant managements have been given the discretion to charge up to Rs 5 per use of their toilets.

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- SDMC claims that as a result of the initiative, an additional 3,500 toilets will be accessible to the public.

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- By roping in hotels and restaurants along with petrol pumps, it would make as many toilets available to the public as possible.

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What is the reaction of the public?

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- The decision has produced mixed reactions from restaurant owners.
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- One side has complained of an **undermining of their 'rights of admission'**.
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- Other side has pointed out that it is **insensitive to deny access** to an individual who needs to use the restroom.
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- Both sides agree that the proposed Rs 5 charge to ostensibly cover costs of maintenance and cleaning.
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How does the SDMC justified its decision?

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- The corporation maintains that because restaurants get health trade licences from the corporation, they are bound to follow its orders.
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- Also, a study commissioned by the Centre in 2015 to gauge the progress of Swachh Bharat programmes put Delhi at the 16th position.
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- While on paper, the SDMC has 600 urinals and roughly 400 toilet complexes in its jurisdiction, **most of them are unusable**.
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- Maintenance of the SDMC's public facilities is poor because the corporation does not have jetting machines that spray water at high pressure to clean the toilets.
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- So, in the light of the SDMC order, it is pertinent to consider, the state of its existing public utilities also.
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Source: The Indian Express

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