

# Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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**ABSTRACT** - Hygiene is a set of practices performed to safeguard health, according to the world health organization (WHO), "Hygiene refers to conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases." WASH is a necessary element in ensuring public health. WASH is an acronym for water, sanitation and hygiene. Owing to their interdependent nature, these three crucial issues are grouped together to constitute a growing sector. Though each a separate field of work, each is dependent on the existence of the other. Dealing with these deficiencies together can achieve a positive impact on the health of people. All three areas in WASH strengthen one another. If one is missing, the others cannot make headway, WASH in schools ensure adequate number of toilet facilities for students and teachers that are safe, clean, private and gender segregated. Facilities should meet the needs of the entire student body, inclusive small children, girls at the age of menstruation and physically handicapped children. Hygiene education should comprise in the school curriculum to inculcate good hygiene, sanitation and water-handling habit, and students should be encouraged to communicate hygiene knowledge to others. The present paper describes how WASH in schools are salient for promoting better health.

*Keywords- hygiene, sanitation, water*

## I. INTRODUCTION

India has faced the problem of providing safe drinking water to over 700 million people in more than 1.5 million villages. for a long time.1972 was a time when government of India started paying attention to this problem and in 1980s the issue became a national priority. As a result by 2011,95% of rural population had access to some form of water supply but soon this became dysfunctional due to lack of participation from local communities resulting in failure of maintenance. Moreover the growth in population led to increased demand of water on one hand and shrinking of water resources all together on the other, by this time people demanded higher level of services.

According to the estimate of 2012,about 52.5 billion people do not have access to sanitation. poor sanitation and hand washing practices result in transmission of disease causing germs. studies indicate that usage of existing toilets in rural areas are very low

88% of diarrheal cases worldwide are linked with unsafe water and inadequate hygiene. Globally, diarrheal diseases account around 1.8 million deaths and children under the

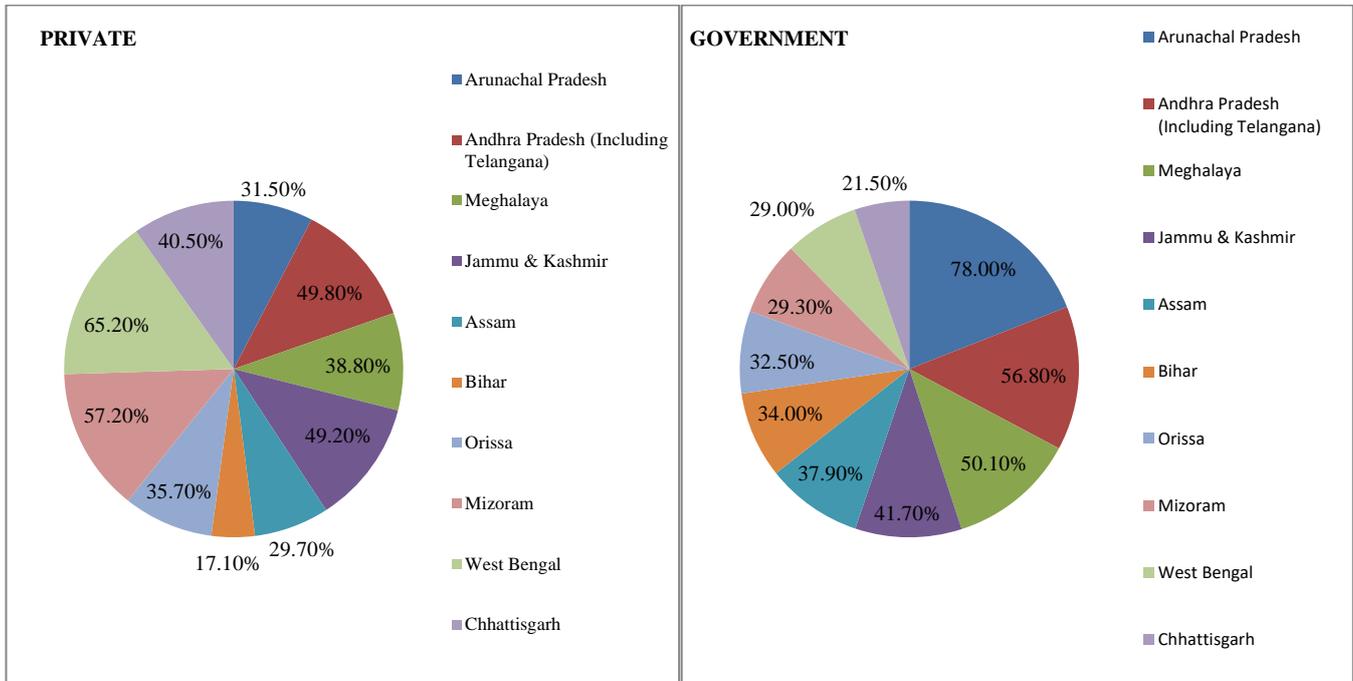
age of 5 years die everyday from diarrheal diseases and out of this,1800 deaths are because of unsafe water and lack of proper sanitation.

Since independence India has made remarkable developments in eradication of polio, neonatal tetanus as well as infant and maternal mortality rates have been improved, but still despite the headway made in the last few years several challenges still remain, there are still inequalities in ,India faces inequality in access to quality water, sanitation and affordable health facilities resulting in burden of communicable and non communicable diseases.

## II. LACK OF FACILITIES IN SCHOOLS OF INDIA

According to the UNICEF District information system data for education(U-DISE) for the year 2013-14,there are total 2,57680 schools without toilet facility.This shows an average of 18% schools in the whole country without toilet facility

Figure 1 Percentage of schools without toilet facilities in 2013-14.

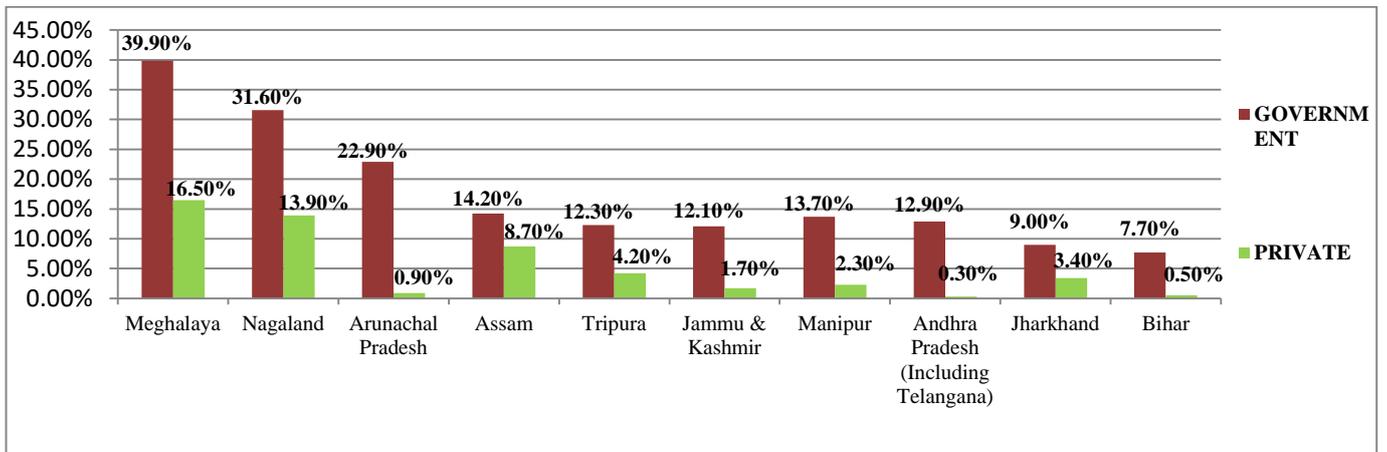


Source: <https://factly.in/schools-without-toilets-in-india->

According to the data, these ten states had a greater percentage of schools without toilets than the national average of 18% in the whole country in 2013-14

58,221 schools across India did not have safe drinking water. A total of 4% of schools lacked in this facility.

Figure 2 Percentage of schools without water facilities in 2013-14.



Source: <https://factly.in/schools-without-toilets-in-india->

As per the above data total schools lacked water facility in 2013-14

It said the Government of India issued national guidelines on menstrual hygiene management in 2015 but a survey in 2016-2017 displayed that only two third of schools in India give menstrual hygiene education with huge variations between states.

Adequate facilities in schools of rural areas are of due importance, children have right to basic facilities such as safe drinking water, clean surrounding, toilets and basic information on hygiene, water and sanitation to create an environment ensuring safety, health, dignity and attendance. Children are quick to adopt and sustain change and they are agents of change among their peers, families and

communities, Hence, providing appropriate facilities in rural Indian schools will ensure the change and sustained development of the rural India as whole.

### III. POOR WASH FACILITY IN INDIA

Though it is said that India has improved in providing toilet facilities in almost all schools in India between 2000 and 2016 but still the rural schools in India has following issues related to WASH

- Poor hand washing facilities
- Poor awareness of children over hygiene and proper sanitation.
- Poor maintenance of available facilities.
- Lack of waste disposal arrangement in schools.

These problems give rise to dropout rates of girls and only some of them complete their education which is a big concern. It will not only affect the children individually, making them unproductive for the society but also it will affect the nation as whole.

#### IV. IMPORTANCE OF WASH FACILITY IN INDIAN SCHOOLS

Water Sanitation and Hygiene in schools make visible changes in the health of children and those of their families and communities and also improves the curriculum. School children spend a lot of time in school during which they are exposed to various physical, social and psychological needs, so it becomes an obligation for schools to help children sort their problems by providing them basic facilities.

The provision of WASH facility in schools ensures rights of pupils to water, sanitation and hygiene and a healthy school environment in general. The impact could have following benefits -:

- It will result in healthy learning environment.
- Healthy environment ensures effective learning
- Opportunity for students to achieve positive hygiene and sanitation behaviour.
- Increased enrolment in schools and decrease in dropout rate.

WASH is highly important for schools as children are the future of the nation and they can bring drastic changes in the society. WASH in schools ensure that the school encompasses :

- Access to safe drinking water and sanitation.
- Separate toilets for girls and boys.
- Doors and adequate lighting to make sure safety and privacy of the pupils.
- Proper management of faecal sludge.
- Regular Hygiene education to the children.
- Lesson on handwashing before handling food.
- Education on proper use of toilets.
- Lesson on recycling waste water.
- Training for garbage disposal.
- Provision of handwashing facility near the eating area.
- Adequate number of toilets.

#### ENSURING SUSTAINED WASH IN SCHOOLS OF RURAL INDIA

It is not a very tough task to implement WASH in schools of rural India but the challenge is to make it sustainable, if sustainable development is targeted in India WASH needs to sustain in schools first. Government of India has introduced several reforms such as National rural Drinking Water Programme(2009), National Rural Health Mission, National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and surveillance programme(2005), Swachh Swasth Savrvatra, and many more to strengthen healthcare and sanitation, but it lies upon our shoulder to maintain the facilities of WASH. So to make the

WASH sustainable in rural schools of India following measures are suggested :

- Proper training of teachers and school management.
- Finance facilities for maintenance of facilities
- Continuous check on the presence of any epidemics
- Regular health checkups of the pupils
- Training of girls on sanitary pad disposal during menstruation
- Continuous treatment of water to ensure safe drinking water

The problem of WASH is easy to combat, it just requires a cooperative effort of people and government so that the rural India could progress and the pupils could be assets for the nation.

#### V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, WASH in schools is of vital importance and it should form an important part in the curriculum, WASH generally refers to provision of basic facilities. Inadequate WASH facility will result in denial of the rights of the children, just provision of the facilities may exhibit development for short term but will have adverse affect in long term hence, becoming a hinderance in sustainable development of the nation. The rural Indian schools need WASH to be effectively implemented so that it could give productive results making the school environment healthier for the children. Teaching Wash behaviour is most important, change in a single behaviour can bring drastic changes in the community. Hand hygiene water and sanitation are the most effective way of to protect the community from illness and transmission of diseases.

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