



Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools

Swachh Bharat: Swachh Vidyalaya is the national campaign driving 'Clean India: Clean Schools'. A key feature of the campaign is to ensure that every school in India has a set of functioning and well maintained water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Water, sanitation and hygiene in schools refers to a combination of technical and human development components that are necessary to produce a healthy school environment and to develop or support appropriate health and hygiene behaviours. The technical components include drinking water, handwashing, toilet and soap facilities in the school compound for use by children and teachers. The human development components are the activities that promote conditions within the school and the practices of children that help to prevent water, hygiene and sanitation related diseases.

School sanitation and hygiene depend on a process of capacity enhancement of teachers, community members, SMCs, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and education administrators. Water, sanitation and hygiene in school aims to make a visible impact on the health and hygiene of children through improvement in their health and hygiene practices, and those of their families and the communities. It also aims to improve the curriculum and teaching methods while promoting hygiene practices and community ownership of water and sanitation facilities within schools. It improves children's health, school enrolment, attendance and retention and paves the way for new generation of healthy children. It is the role of policymakers, government representatives, citizens and parents to make sure that every child attends a school that has access to safe drinking water, proper sanitation and hygiene facilities. This is every child's right.

The benefits of water sanitation and hygiene to school children

- The provision of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in school **secures a healthy school environment** and protects children from illness and exclusion. It is a first step towards a healthy physical learning environment, benefiting both learning and health. Children who are healthy and well-nourished can fully participate in school and get the most from the education. Hygiene education in schools help promote those practices that would prevent water and sanitation related diseases as well as encourage healthy behaviour in future generations of adults.
- Girls are particularly vulnerable to dropping out of school, partly because many are reluctant to continue their education when toilets and washing facilities are not private, not safe or simply not available. When schools have appropriate, gender-separated facilities, an obstacle to attendance is removed. Thus having gender segregated toilets in schools **particularly matters for girls**. Gender norms and physiology make privacy more important for girls than boys, and biological realities mean that girls need adequate sanitary facilities at school to manage menstruation. Basic facilities that provide for good hygiene and privacy, along with sensitive health promotion assist girls to stay in school and complete their education.
- Hygiene in school also supports **school nutrition**. The simple act of washing hands with soap before eating the school mid day meal assists to break disease transmission routes. Children get the nutritional benefits intended, rather than ingesting bacteria, germs and viruses. Studies show that when hand washing becomes part of a child's daily routine the benefits to health are evident and the practice does not easily fade.¹ School is therefore an ideal setting for teaching good hygiene behaviours that children can also carry home.

¹ Valerie A. Curtis, Lisa O. Danquah, and Robert V. Aunger (2009). Planned, motivated and habitual hygiene behaviour: an eleven country review. Health Educ. Res. 24: 655-67

- Having safe water, toilet and hygiene facilities in schools **promotes equity**. All children are equal in their right to access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and all children gain benefits through the improved hygiene practices promoted in schools. By providing gender-segregated toilets, students are assured of privacy and dignity, a particularly important factor for girls' school attendance. By providing inclusive and accessible facilities, children with special needs are able to attend school and further contribute to the development of their society.
- Having a clean school fosters a child's pride in his or her school and community. It enables every child **become an agent of change** for improving water, sanitation and hygiene practices in their families and within their community. School water and sanitation clubs encourage students to participate in taking care of latrines and handwashing stations, and in providing safe water where necessary. Club members create rotating lists of responsibilities, sharing sanitation- and water-related chores among both boys and girls. This also fosters pride and ownership, and it counteracts the belief that these tasks are only for women and girls or particular social groups.
- **Children with disabilities** are also vulnerable to dropping out of school. Accessible school facilities are a key to school attendance for children with disabilities. An effective water, sanitation and hygiene programmes seeks to remove barriers by promoting inclusive design – user-friendly, child-friendly facilities that benefit all users, including adolescent girls, small children and children who are sick or disabled. Toilets and handwashing facilities, for example, need to be customised to fit children's smaller size, and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities that are traditionally designed for the 'average' child must consider the fact that children have a wide range of abilities and needs. The most cost-effective way to improve access for all children is to incorporate accessibility into the design from the outset, rather than making expensive changes later. To make sure facilities are accessible, it is essential to involve children with disabilities in the design process. The cost of making inclusive facilities is minimal compared to the costs of exclusion.

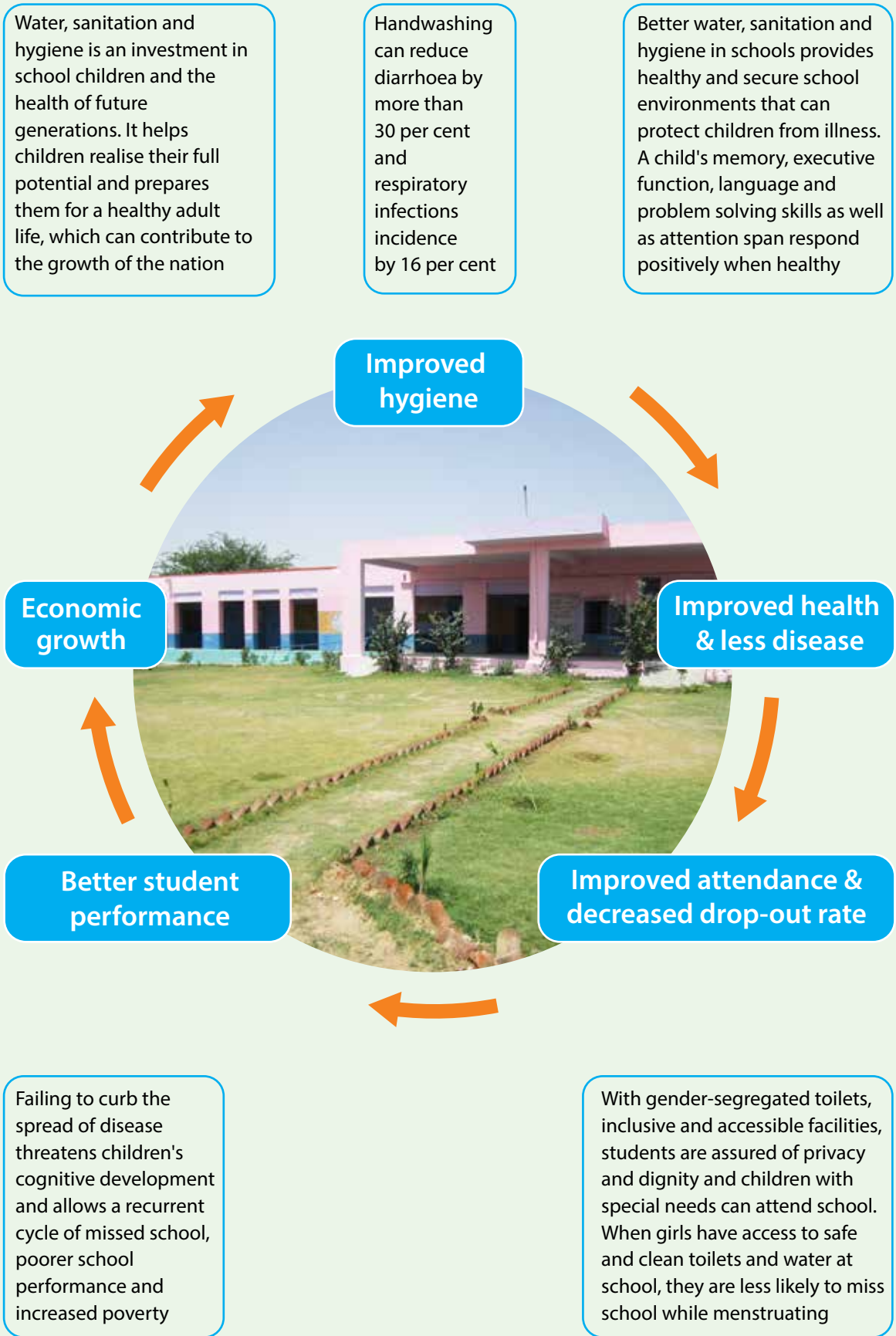


“Before construction of this school toilet I used to miss the class a week every month during the menstrual period and hesitated coming to school because I had to go to home for urination during the school time. Now separate clean toilet for girl is in the school I enjoy coming to school every day. I motivated my father to have a toilet at home which he constructed after taking loan from the neighbour.”

– Ms. Tulsi Prajapati, Student of Class 8
Haripur Upper Primary School, Guna, Madhya Pradesh

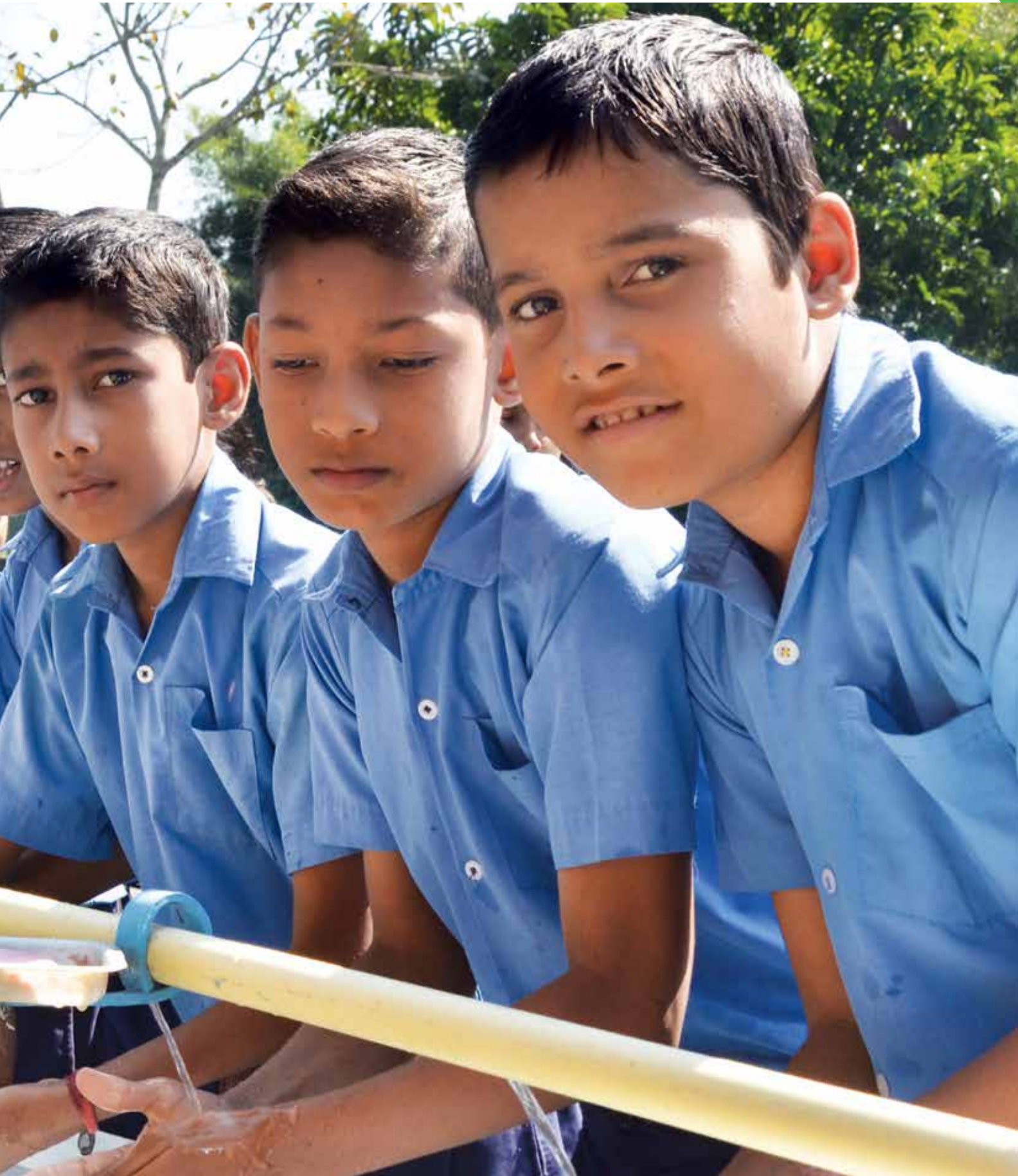


Box 1.1: A clean and healthy school creates a cycle of opportunities





Children washing hands with soap before mid day meal in Sajjanpara School, Kamrup District, Assam



Box 1.2: Some facts about water, sanitation and hygiene in schools

Research shows that the presence of water, sanitation and hygiene in schools results in a number of benefits for children, especially girls and also their teachers.

- An overall increase in enrolment by 12 per cent in primary schools (Grades 1-5) and 8 per cent in upper-primary schools (Grades 6-8), leading to lower dropout rates.
- Increased female enrolment with younger girls and boys experiencing larger benefits than older children.
- Increased retention of female teachers; and
- More students presenting for exams with higher pass rates.²
- In Alwar District, India, school sanitation increased girl's enrolment by one-third, and improved academic performance for boys and girls by 25 per cent (UN-Water 2008).

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Few Global Evidences

- A study undertaken in Bangladesh revealed an 11 per cent increase in girls' enrolment mainly due to the provision of sanitary latrines. (IRC 2007).
- A water, sanitation and hygiene in schools evaluation in Kenya indicated that girls were absent less in schools where there was more handwashing and a very high toilet use. The association suggests that in one way or another, the successful implementation of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Package in a school can significantly reduce girls' absenteeism, a substantial and highly desirable impact from the project (IRC 2009a).

When water, sanitation and hygiene are missing from a girl's school experience, studies indicate that:

- Up to 12 per cent of the school year missed by girls is during their menstruation (WHO 2009).
- In Uganda, 1 in 3 girls missed all or part of a school day during their menstrual cycle (Kirk and Sommer 2006).

Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi

Benefits of Handwashing

- Handwashing at critical times – including before eating or preparing food and after using the toilet – can reduce diarrhoea rates by almost 40 per cent (3IE 2009).
- Handwashing in institutions such as primary schools and daycare centres reduce the incidence of diarrhoea by an average of 30 per cent (Cochrane 2008).
- Handwashing promotion in schools can play a role in reducing absenteeism among primary school children. In China, promotion and distribution of soap in primary schools resulted in 54 per cent fewer days of absence among students compared to schools without such an intervention (Bowen et al 2007).



² http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/adukia/files/adukia_sanitation_and_education.pdf



Key Commitments for Swachh Vidyalaya

India's strong commitment to providing schools with adequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities is supported by legislation and is championed by the Honourable Prime Minister and supported by the Right to Education Act (2009) which necessitates ensuring drinking water and sanitation facilities in schools. The national flagship programmes, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Nirmal Gram Puraskar also support this requirement. The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) national sanitation guidelines provide for additional sanitation facilities in schools, including incinerators for menstrual hygiene management through the NGP incentive. Following are the key policy initiatives by Government of India.

Constitution

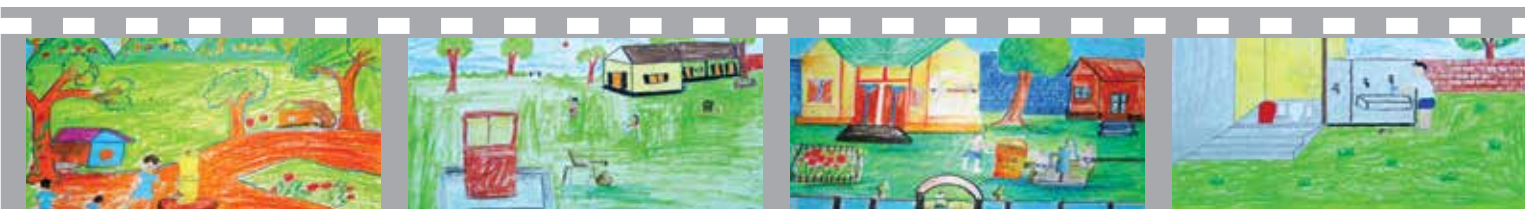
- Article 21-A "free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right".

Legislation

- Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
- The RTE Act 2009 provides a legally enforceable rights framework with certain time targets that Governments must adhere to. The Schedule to the RTE Act lays down the norms and standards (*including drinking water and sanitation*) for a school building. A school building has to be an all-weather building comprising at least one classroom for every teacher, **barrier free access, separate toilets for boys and girls, safe and adequate drinking water facility for all children.**
- Supreme Court directive to all states to prioritise school toilets and drinking water.

Policies and programmes

- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**, is Government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner. Water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure facilities are provided in all new schools.
- The mid day meal Programme is a nutrition programme which reaches almost 10 crore children daily, in 12 lakh schools. Group handwashing with soap before mid day meal is promoted across the country in order to enhance the nutritional outcomes.
- **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)** launched by Ministry of Human Resource Development, March, 2009, to enhance access to secondary education and to improve its quality. Besides it also lays emphasis on secondary schools to conform to prescribed norms of providing access to quality physical infrastructure like good classrooms, quality toilet infrastructure and drinking water provisions, and norms of removing gender, socio-economic and disability barriers.
- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)** aims at ensuring access and quality education to girls from disadvantaged groups belonging to SC and ST population, by setting up residential schools at upper primary level. Infrastructure support to these centres includes safe drinking water and toilet facilities as per the prevailing SOR rates.





A beautifully designed toilet infrastructure built by Panchayats in Mirzapur district, Uttar Pradesh



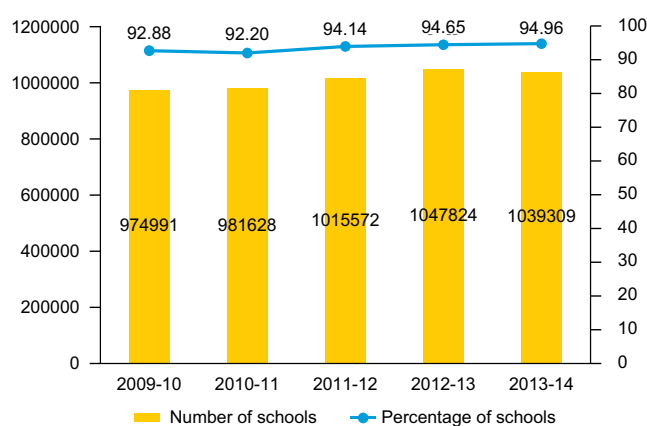
Simple handwashing infrastructure and dedicated time before mid day meal in daily schedule, in Madhya Pradesh, ensures all children wash hands

Status of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools

The provision of drinking water and toilet facilities in schools has steadily increased over the last few years. However much more needs to be done to meet basic quality and adequacy norms and to improve equitable access. Above all, water and sanitation facilities must be used every day and for this to happen these facilities must be functional – and this includes the provision and maintenance of handwashing with soap facilities.

Status of Drinking Water in Schools

Figure 2.1: Status of Drinking Water in Schools

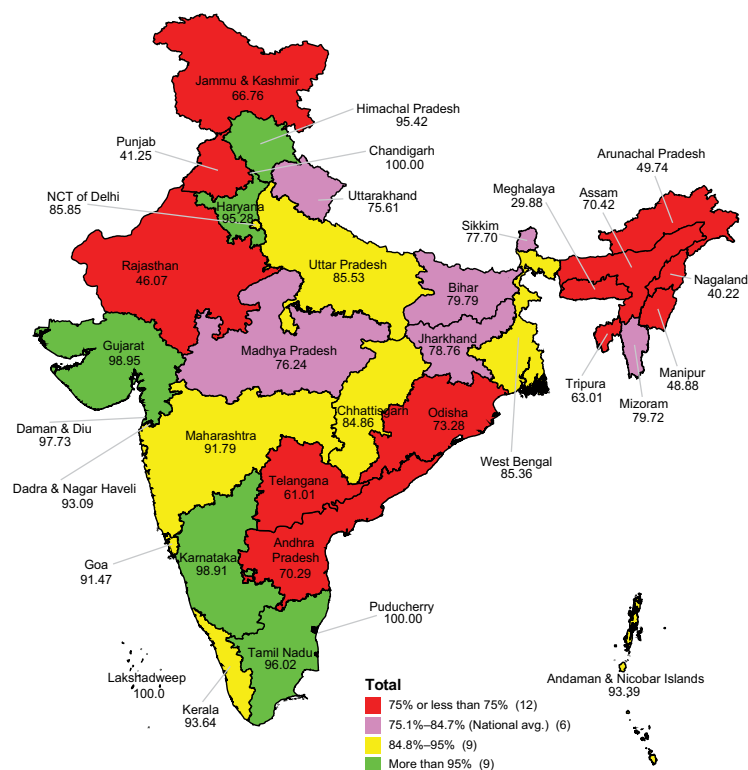


Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi

Box 2.1: DISE statistics for drinking water in schools, 2013-2014

- The number of government schools in the country having drinking water facility has increased from nearly 0.9 million (83%) in 2005-06 to 1.03 million (95%).
- 193 million children in schools have access to drinking water facilities, however 5 million (5%) children still do not have access to this facility.

Figure 2.2: State-wise Functionality of Drinking Water Facilities in Schools in India



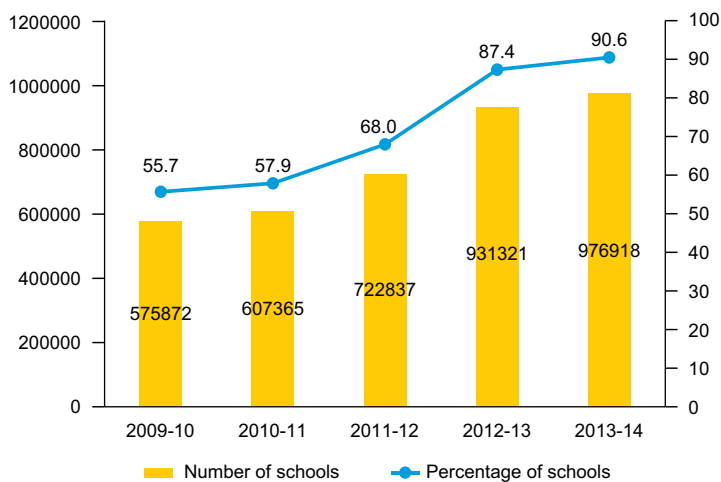
Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi

Status of Sanitation in Schools

Girls' Toilet

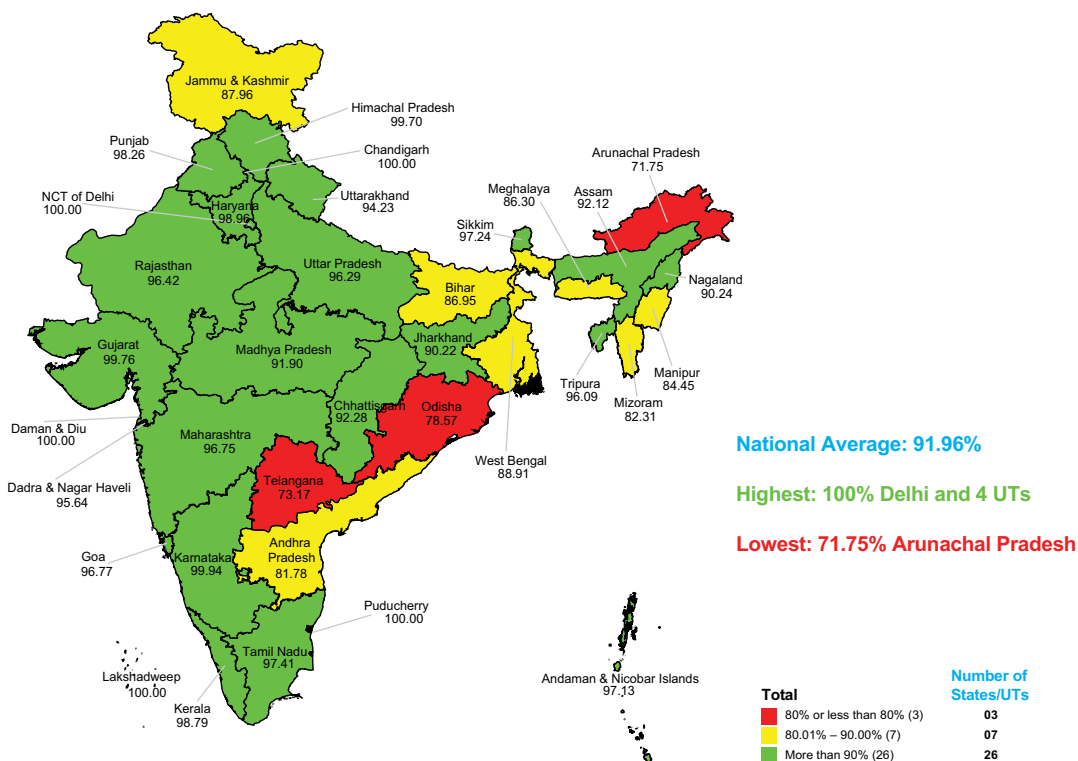
The number of schools having separate toilet facilities for girls has increased from 0.4 million (37%) in 2005-06 to almost 1 million in 2013-14 (91%). However, there are disparities within states in terms of access, coverage and functionality that needs to be noted while planning for the Swachh Vidyalaya campaign.

Figure 2.3: Status of Girls Toilet in Schools



Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi

Figure 2.4: State-wise Functionality of Separate Toilets for Girls in Schools in India



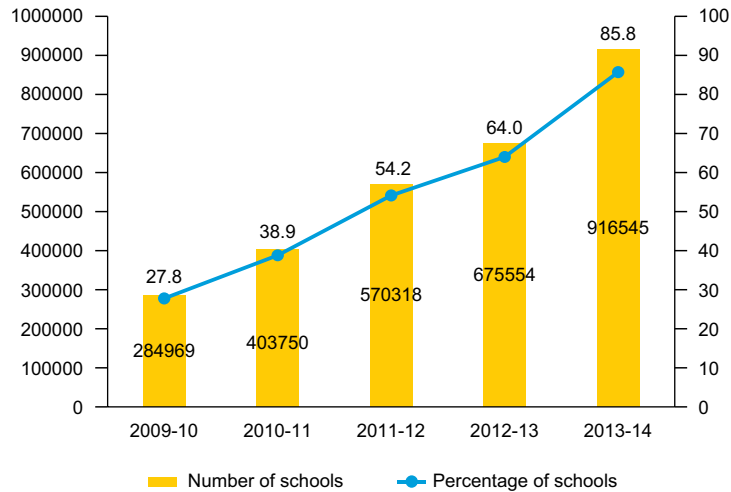
Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi



Boys' Toilet

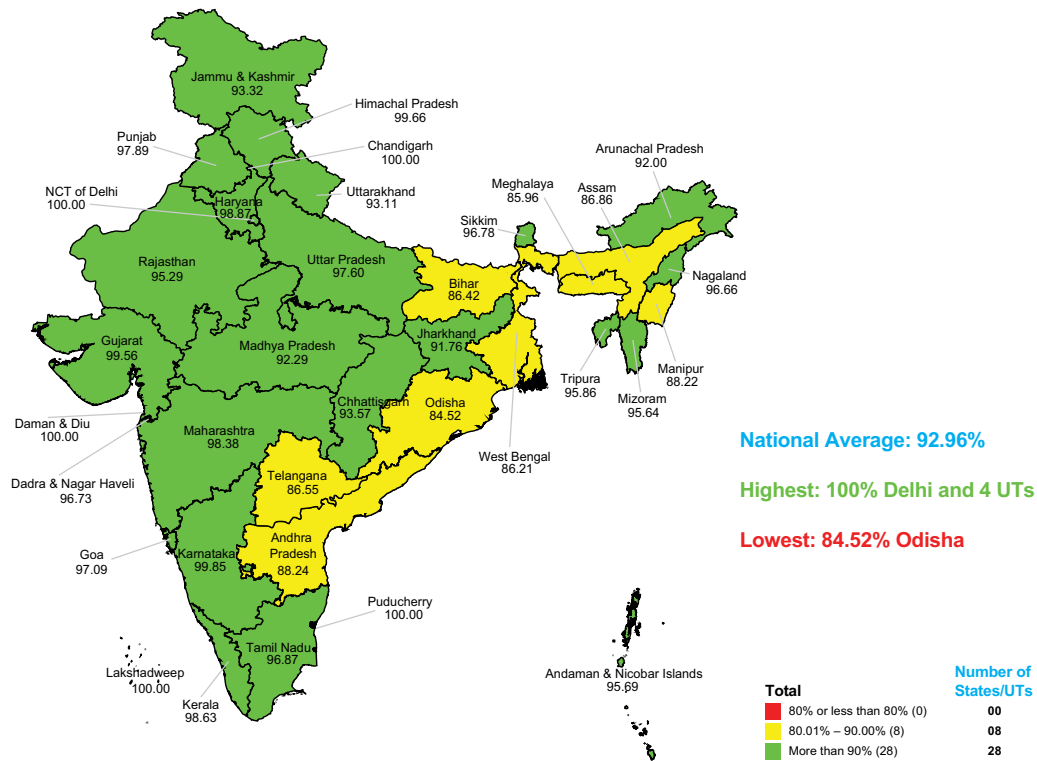
The number of government schools having separate toilet facilities for boys has increased from 0.4 million (31%) in 2005-06 to 0.8 million (85%) in 2013-14.

Figure 2.5: Status of Boys Toilet in Schools



Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi

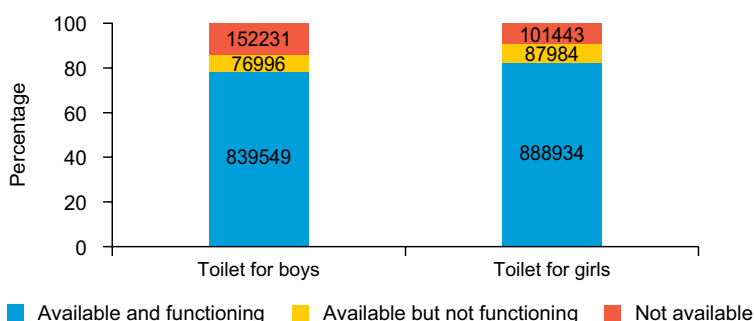
Figure 2.6: State-wise Functionality of Separate Toilets for Boys in Schools in India



Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi

The Functionality Gap

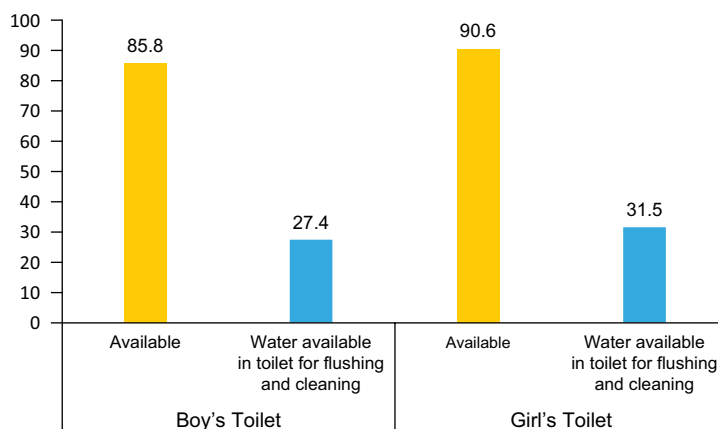
Figure 2.7: State-wise Functionality of Sanitation Facilities in Schools in India



Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi

- The coverage of schools with drinking water and toilet facilities has improved. However, poor operation and maintenance of these facilities are undermining sustained coverage, resulting in loss of investments. For example, lack of dedicated funds for operation and maintenance, weak management and poor water availability inside toilets, all contribute to dysfunctional, unusable toilets.
- Poor quality of construction and low compliance with standards and norms reduces the life of infrastructure.

Figure 2.8: Availability of Water for Cleaning and Flushing of Toilets, Still a Major Issue



Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi



Lack of water in toilets and poor maintenance lead to dysfunctional toilets and water points and thus loss of any investments



Hygiene and especially handwashing with soap in all schools before the mid day meal remains a challenge. Group handwashing facilities and soap, systematic behaviour change initiatives are required, to sustain changes in practices and behaviours amongst students. Menstrual hygiene management is missing in majority of schools. This includes gender friendly infrastructure, access to sanitary products and their disposal mechanisms and timely and appropriate hygiene education.

Status of Hygiene in Schools

Figure 2.9: Percentage of Schools with a Designated Handwashing Space

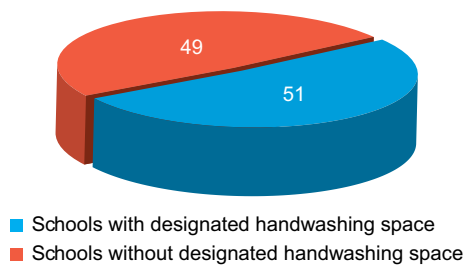
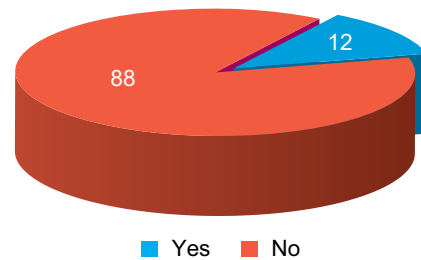


Figure 2.10: Percentage of Schools with Soap for Handwashing



Source: U-DISE, 2013-14, NUEPA, New Delhi

Findings of an assessment conducted in 540 schools in nine states in India on Mid Day Meal (MDM) Programme reveal that:

- Only (51%) of the schools have a designated handwashing space and in 44 per cent of the schools observed, the handwashing space was being used.
- Only close to one in ten (12%) of schools had soap/detergent available at the handwashing space.
- Nearly half (49%) of the students washed their hands using only water. Only two out of five (42%) students use soap/detergent. (Source: Hygiene Practices in Schools during mid day meals, UNICEF-India Study 2009).
- Survey conducted in 392 schools in seven states in India reveal that nearly one third (32%) of the children wash hands with soap before eating. (Source: PAHELI Survey by Pratham under United Joint Programme on Convergence (UNJPC), 2012).





Achieving health and educational outcomes through a combination of clean school, clean hands and a nutritious mid day meal

