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## **Availability and Utilization of the Handwashing Facilities in Primary Schools of Hasnabad Block of North 24 Parganas in West Bengal**

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### **Abstract**

*Hand washing is particularly important for children, as they are more vulnerable to infections gained from unwashed hands and also due to their unhealthy behavior. The study was conducted to determine the availability of hand washing facilities, hand washing materials, hand washing knowledge and practices among primary schools of Hasnabad block of North 24 parganas in West Bengal. A cross sectional survey was carried out among 400 children and 10 Headmasters in 10 selected schools. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview and observation in the selected schools and the collected data were presented by the tables, bar charts, pie charts. Three point liker scale questionnaire was developed including five important factors regarding utilization of the hand washing facilities and the availability of hand washing material. The study found that hand washing facilities were not available in majority of the schools, and the relevant equipments were not available/ sufficient according to needs in majority of the schools. Hand washing facilities were not available while some available ones are not even effectively utilized. It was therefore recommended that there is a need to provide more and better facilities in the schools and their proper utilization.*

**Keywords: Unhealthy behavior, availability, utilization, hand washing, effectively utilized.**

**Introduction:** The simple act of hand washing with soap before eating the school midday meal assists to break disease transmission routes, and contributes to overall health and educational outcomes. Government of India is making efforts to institutionalize this practice of daily hand washing with soap before the MDM, by all children, in all the 1.4 million government schools in India. This also is a part of the national campaign, Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya campaign, launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development,

to achieve universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene in schools in India. The campaign has been launched, 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, thus contributing to improved health and educational outcomes for children. The national Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya campaign outlines the key priorities and strategies of GOI to achieve universal WASH in Schools. The campaign suggests an 'Essential Package' for schools, which includes access to functional gender disaggregated toilets, drinking water facilities, accompanied by daily hand washing with soap before the MDM by all children. Innovative ideas like institutionalizing 'group hand washing before MDM' potentially reaching 110 million children in 1.2 million schools in India, everyday remains the hallmark of the campaign. There remains a strong emphasis on adopting appropriate behaviour change approaches and Operation and Maintenance to ensure that facilities are used and sustained and behaviours last long. Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya campaign calls upon corporates, individuals, foundations and state governments for increased investments, attention and prioritization of WASH in schools.

WASH in Schools (Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion in schools), supports global efforts to realize our vision of a world where all children go to schools that provide a safe, healthy and comfortable environment where children grow, learn and thrive. WASH in Schools improves attendance, health and cognitive development, increases girls' participation, establishes positive hygiene behaviors, offers the opportunity to introduce better WASH practices in families and communities and addresses issues of inequity and exclusion. In April 2012, the Government of India and UNICEF will organize a regional conference on WASH in Schools in South Asia, in New Delhi. This conference responds to the 4th South Asia Conference, held in Colombo in April 2011, which committed to raise the profile of WASH in schools with the objective of ensuring that every school has functioning, child-friendly toilets, separate for girls and boys, with facilities for menstrual hygiene management. India's 2009 Right to Education Act, the appeal of the Prime Minister of India to incorporate hygiene education in schools and the extensive work done on WASH in Schools by many of the Indian States provide a very relevant context to understand the importance of WASH in Schools. This document gives an overview of achievements to ensure that school children and their teachers can use safe drinking water, practice good hygiene, especially hand washing with soap, and use clean toilets in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The document reflects the enabling environment that governments have created to ensure that basic WASH facilities are provided in all schools, and that school staff, students and the parent communities are able and committed to operate and maintain these facilities. The document also presents evidence that governments intend to increase WASH in Schools investments, both in hardware and software, and to ensure that WASH indicators are included in the national education management information systems. It is encouraging to note that

governments in South Asia consider water supply, sanitation and hygiene as basic school components and are prepared to make the investments needed to secure this. Studies confirm that schools can be powerful agents of change in society. In schools, children mix with other children in ways that were unthinkable a generation ago. While communities are often more conservative than schools, it is through children questioning traditional attitudes and practices that society is gradually changing. All countries in South Asia show examples of excellent practice in WASH in schools for replication throughout the region. This report is recommended for all those working towards universal use of safe drinking water, basic sanitation and good hygiene practices in schools. Ensuring that children learn to practice the key WASH behaviours at a young age will give them skills that will benefit them, their families and communities. This report will provide a sound basis for the regional conference on WASH-in-Schools to consider key actions for accelerating WASH- in-Schools to promote enrolment and retention, especially for girls and children from disadvantaged groups, review and strengthen the monitoring system for sustainable use of WASH in schools and review inclusive and participatory practices for wash in Schools programming.

**Statement of the problem:** The problem of this study that the hand washing materials were not available as per requirement and where available were not being utilized comprehensively. Learning, hygiene and health are strongly inter-linked as children miss school or perform poorly when they are suffering from diseases related to poor hand washing. These illnesses spread fast where many children are together for many hours a day. Most of these children may not have great hygiene practices. Also many parents send their children to school whether they are well or not and the spread of diseases happens very fast in schools than just about any other place in the society. These diseases according to WHO (2007) are preventable by simple hand washing with soap and can significantly reduce deaths due to these diseases by halve. There is therefore a need to examine the extent of availability of hand washing facilities and their utilization among primary schools pupils in Hasnabad block. It is further hoped that this study will stimulate others to further research in the field of class room.

**Significance of the study:** Washing your hands properly is one of the most important things you can do to help prevent and control the spread of many illnesses. Removing germs through hand washing therefore helps prevent diarrhea and respiratory infections and may even help prevent skin and eye infections. It will reduce the risk of things like flu, food poisoning and healthcare associated infections being passed from person to person. As children, we would have learnt from school the importance of washing our hands always especially after using the toilet. They help to Change their current hygiene behaviour and continue better hygiene practices in the future. They Learn to observe, communicate, cooperate, listen and carry out decisions about hygienic conditions and practices for themselves, their friends and younger siblings whose hygiene they may care for (skills they may apply in other aspects of life).

### **Objectives of the study:**

- To find out the different between Boys and Girls for the utilization of the hand washing facilities before Lunch (Mid day meal)
- To find out availability of the hand washing materials (soap/liquid soap, water etc)
- To assess the need of facilities in primary schools.
- To make viable recommendations in the light of findings of the study for improvement in the quality of education.

**Review of related literature:** The purpose of the chapter is to report on the literature relevant to research problems of the present study. A details review of the relevant literature provides a framework for the study being undertaken. It helps to identify relevant theories assist in establishing an appropriate research methodology to study the problems being investigated.

- 1) Eseoghene. D.I 1, Ujiro.I 2 - AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF HANDWASHING FACILITIES AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN UGHELLI NORTH L.G.A OF DELTA STATE (2013). The findings show that hand washing facilities in the schools were few and their usage were hindered by barriers such as lack of maintenance culture, lack of hand washing supplies among others.
- 2) 1 Lawani.O.F, 2 Ukpanukpong.U.R, 4 Utu-Baku.A.B, 5 Fana.Y.N, 2 Uyabeme.N.R, 3Ajakaye.F.O, 3Oresegun.A.O, 1 Eze.N.F and 2 Edoamodu.E.C - Potable water supply and sanitation practices in selected public primary school pupils in Owerri north local government area, Imo state, Nigeria (2014). The finding show that lack of potable water supply and functional toilets in the schools could affect the general hygiene status of the schools and the practice of hand washing by the pupils.
- 3) Rai.P1, Sah.B.R1, Rijal.R2, Pokharel.K.P1. - Neglected scenario of sanitation in schools of Sunsari district of Nepal: Critical sphere for public health consideration (2015). The finding show that Two public schools were completely devoid of sanitary facilities though toilet facility was present physically. Students couldn't use toilet due to lack of water in one school due to theft of tube well and septic tank of the toilet was full in another school. Other remaining schools didn't have satisfactory, clean and proper sanitary facilities. Only few schools had convenient hand washing point.

### **Hypothesis:**

- Girls students is the better from than that the boys students for the utilization of the hand washing facilities.
- Hand washing materials(soap/ liquid soap, water etc) are not available.
- The facilities are not satisfactory in Primary school of the Hasnabad block of North 24 parganas in West Bengal
- And the utilization of the facilities are not satisfactory

**Delimitation:**

- The study delimited only within a block under Hasnabad of north 24 parganas of West Bengal.
- The study restricted 10 school, 10 Headmaster and 400 Students from the selected school.
- The data will be collected only from the primary schools of the Border area of Hasnabad block of North 24 pgs in West Bengal.

**Methods of the study:**

**Research Design:** The study was descriptive in nature and survey approach was used.

**Population:** The population of study consisted of 10 Primary schools, 10 Head teacher and 400 students from the selected primary school of Hasnabad block in West Bengal.

**Sample:** The sample of the study comprised 400 students (10 students from every class- i to iv and 40 students from each selected school) and 10 Headmasters(one headmaster from each school) from 10 selected primary school of the Hasnabad block of North 24 parganas in West Bengal.

**Research Tools:** The questionnaires was developed after reviewing the concerned literature regarding availability and utilization of the hand washing facilities and were administered on the sample

1. Questionnaire for the head of the institutions.
2. Questionnaire for the students studying at primary school
3. Interview
4. Observation etc.

**Data Presentation:**

**Table No.01**

*Use of the hand washing facilities before Lunch (Mid day meal)*

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Boys	90(45%)	50(25%)	60(30%)	200
Girls	95(47.5%)	50(25%)	55(27.5%)	200
Total	185(46.25%)	100(25%)	115(28.75%)	400

**Table No. 02**

*Use of the hand washing facilities after Latrine*

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Boys	100(50%)	50(25%)	50(25%)	200
Girls	105(52.5%)	55(27.5%)	40(22.5%)	200
Total	205(51.25%)	105(26.25%)	90(22.5%)	400

**Table No. 03**

*Use of the hand washing facilities after play or clean of the Room*

	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Boys	80(40%)	40(20%)	80(40%)	200
Girls	90(45%)	35(17.5%)	75(37.5%)	200
Total	170(42%)	75(18.75%)	155(38.75%)	400

**Table No. 04**

*Availability of the Soap /liquid soap facilities for washing*

	Sufficient	Not sufficient	No commend	Total
Teachers	04(40%)	05(50%)	01(10%)	10(100%)
Total	04(40%)	05(50%)	01(10%)	10(100%)

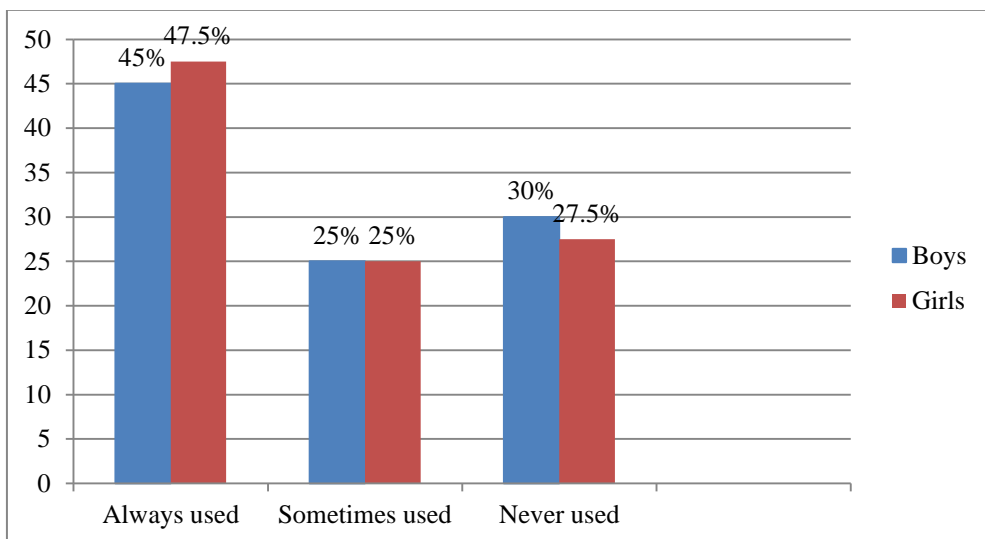
**Table No. 05**

*Availability of the water facilities for washing*

	Sufficient	Not sufficient	No commend	Total
Teachers	06(60%)	03(30%)	01(10%)	10(100%)
Total	06(60%)	03(30%)	01(10%)	10(100%)

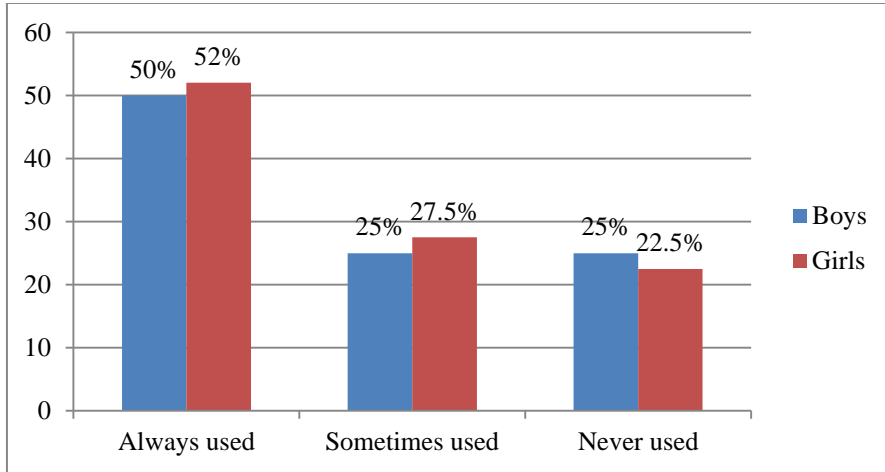
### Data Interpretation:

**1.** Use of the hand washing facilities before Lunch (Mid day meal) **The Table 1 shows** that types students and used hand washing facilities. This table indicates that boys students used 45% always, 25% sometimes and 30% never whereas girls students used 47.5% always, 25% sometimes, and 27.5% not used.



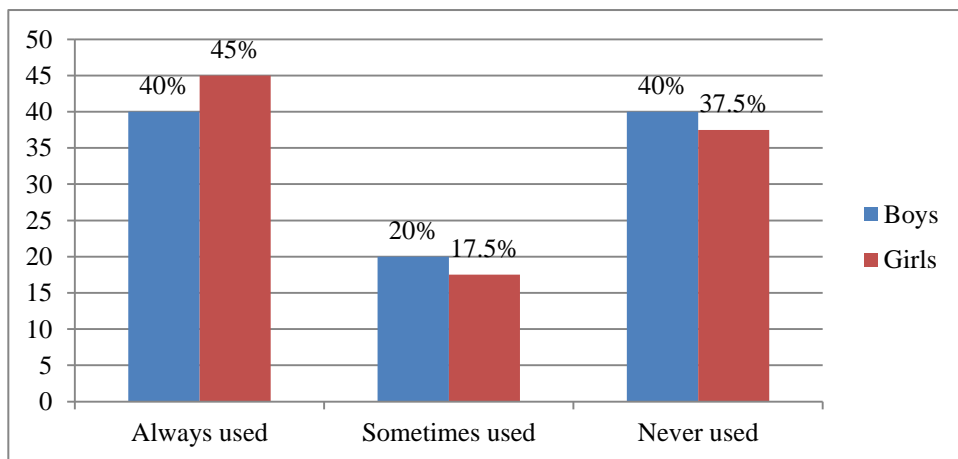
**Fig. 01:** Percentage distribution of the students according to boys and girls students for the utilization of the hand washing facilities before lunch (Mid Day Meal) in primary school.

2. Use of the hand washing facilities after Latrine **the Table 2** shows that types of students and Use of the hand washing facilities after Latrine. This table indicates that boys students used 50% always, 25% sometimes and 25% never whereas girls students used 52.5% always, 27.5% sometimes, and 22.5% never used.



**Fig. 02:** Percentage distribution of the students according to boys and girls students for the utilization of the hand washing facilities after Latrine in primary school.

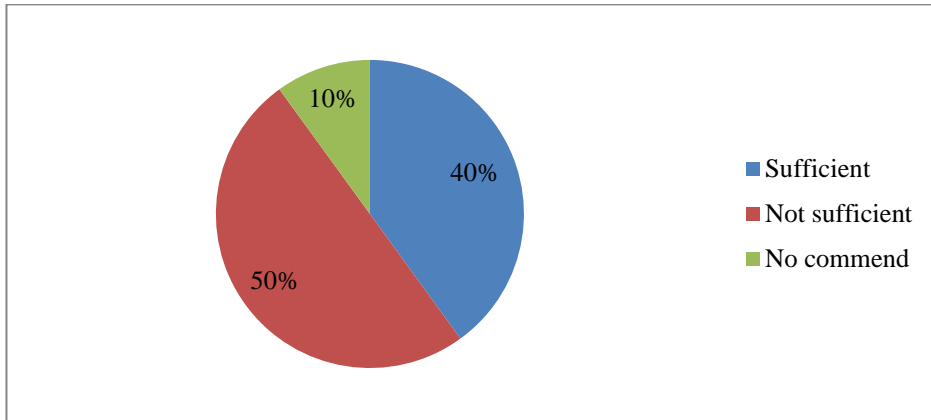
3. Use of the hand washing facilities after play or clean the Room **the Table 3** shows that types of students and Use of the hand washing facilities after playing or cleaning the Room. This table indicates that boys students used 40% always, 20% sometimes and 40% never whereas girls students used 45% always, 17.5% sometimes, and 37.5% never used.



**Fig. 03:** Percentage distribution of the students according to boys and girls students for the utilization of the hand washing facilities after play or clean the Room in primary school.

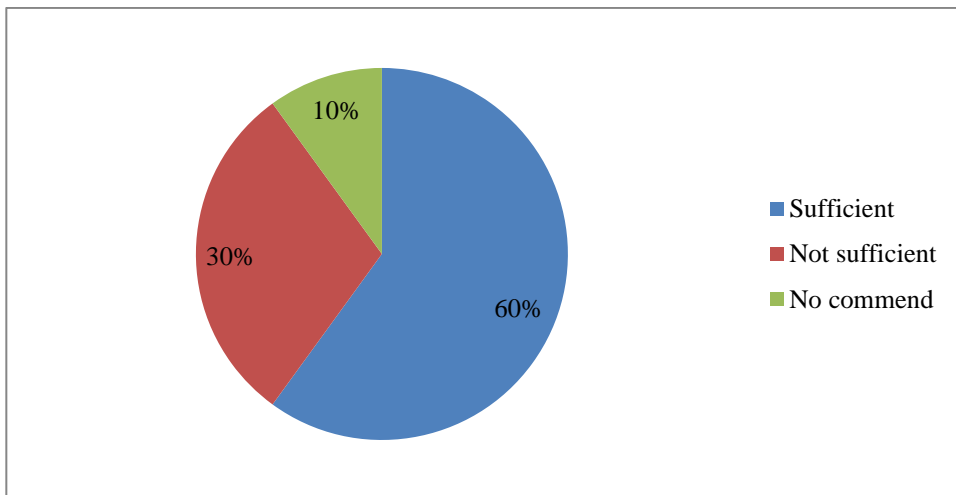
4. Availability of the liquid Soap /soap facilities for washing **The Table 4** shows that Head teachers and. Availability of the liquid Soap /soap facilities for washing in school. This

table indicates that Head teachers said 40% sufficient, 50% not sufficient and 10% did not commend.



**Fig. 04:** Percentage distribution according to Headmasters for the availability of the Soap / liquid soap facilities in schools

5. Availability of the water facilities for washing **The Table 5** shows that Head teachers and. Availability of the water facilities for washing in school. This table indicates that Head teachers said 60% sufficient, 30% not sufficient and 10% did not commend.



**Fig. 05:** Percentage distribution according to Headmasters for the availability of the water facilities in schools

**Findings:** The following table indicates that in maximum number of schools in Border area of the Hasnabad the hand washing materials were not available as per requirement and where available were not being utilized comprehensively. Maximum students were not conscious for the utilization of the hand washing facilities. Also show that



the Girls students is the better conscious from than that the boys students for the utilization of the hand washing facilities.

### **Recommendation:**

1. Hand washing facilities can be provided/ enforced by the head teacher.
2. These facilities should be provided according to their requirements of the students.
3. Hand washing facilities should be made available and sufficient in every classroom to enhance effectiveness and monitoring by teachers.
4. Hand washing facilities and supplies should be a major priority in all primary schools in the Border area of Hasnabad block of North 24 parganas because of its importance in preventing communicable diseases.
5. All stakeholders should work in conjunction with the Parents Teachers Association of each school to ensure constant and adequate provision.
6. This will further encourage usage and consequently reduce loss of valuable school days. This will translate into effective teaching and learning
7. Emphasis should be laid on proper hand washing practice by the government to promote healthy school days
8. Adequate supervision policies should be put in place by every school, enforced by laws and constantly monitored by the Local Education Authority, Ministry of Education, to be able to meet with the millennium Developmental goals for Education and Health.

**Conclusion:** The conclusions of the present study are as follows.

There is the need for effective hand washing education in the schools to help improve hand washing knowledge and practices. Hand washing facilities in the schools were found to be inadequate. Availability of hand washing facilities was not satisfactory in any school. The utilization of hand washing facilities by students was unsatisfactory. Teachers are also important advocates for hand washing with soap but they need the skills, materials and methodologies to implement hand washing with soap programs in their schools. Beyond the school's immediate setting, the significance of cultural and contextual factors increased. The degree to which children were agents of change within their families and communities was based on local culture and customs. The mainstreaming and scaling up of a hand washing with soap program for schoolchildren depended on leadership, policy and institutional setting. Implementing primary school hand washing with soap programs on a national scale required institutional commitment. The program approach was therefore more informal, focusing on extracurricular activities to support the existing curriculum and on collaboration with water and sanitation projects.

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