

## **Hygiene Education in India**

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### **Abstract**

Since independence sanitation and hygiene was one of concerns of Indian government. However, Initial effort of Indian government towards improving sanitation and hygiene education in schools was input based. Over the period of time it was realized that behavioral change and application of knowledge is more important. Present paper highlights various efforts and policies of the Indian Government which is not only based on the constructions and inputs but also on the applied knowledge and practices of hygiene. Focus has been put on new approach of teaching methodology, modified curriculum which is more practical and relevant. Improvement in school sanitation and hygiene education in some states has proved that success can be achieved if all stakeholders (Parents, teachers, student, and administration) involve faithfully with pragmatic approach.

**Keywords:** Sanitation, hygiene, education, school, curriculum, students, parents, teachers

### **Introduction**

Swachha Bharat Mission and allocation of huge amount by Government of India in recent budget to health care shows the importance of health care and sanitation. Now it is being realized that health and sanitation plays catalytic role in human capital formation and economic development. Good sanitation and hygiene education keeps many diseases and malnutrition at bay and develop healthy workforce. Indian government has launched various programs to ensure that all the schools, in particular, those in rural areas have basic sanitation facilities. It's also being ensured that good hygiene practices are taught in the schools. Children are more receptive to new ideas and hence the focus on educational institutions where sanitation education can be effectively imparted to change the behavior, mind set and habits of the children. The experience gained by children through use of toilets in school and sanitation education imparted by teachers would also reach home and influence their parents to adopt good sanitary habits. By focusing on children today, by giving them tools and knowledge to change behaviors today, future generations can be stronger and healthier.

### **Government and Hygiene Education in the Schools**

Promotion of sanitation was very close to heart of Mahatma Gandhi. Since first five year plan (1951-1956), water supply and sanitation were the part of national agenda, but the pace of progress on sanitation scheme happened to be slow. Central rural sanitation program CRSP (1986) under the ministry of rural development was launched by government of India. Main emphasis of CRSP was on garbage, excreta and waste water disposal. It succeeded to some extent. Total sanitation campaign TSC (1999) was an improvement over CRSP since it included school sanitation as a primary intervention to universalize sanitation facilities. It was launched with the aim to make the Government intervention more demand responsive and community based program.

TSC focuses on community-led and people-centered initiatives emphasizing on information, hygiene education, human resource development (HRD) and capacity building along with providing hardware sanitary facilities to household, community, schools and Anganwadis. Involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI's), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and NGOs were also creating environment for the evolvement of School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) in which the role of children in absorbing and popularizing new ideas and Concepts was recognized. In early 2000 Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) and UNICEF collaborated to develop, test and demonstrate models for improving school sanitation and hygiene education as well as water supply and the environment in rural primary schools.

The success of a school hygiene programme is not determined only by the number of latrines constructed and the number of hand pumps installed or water connections built. Nor is the success of a programme determined simply by what children know. Knowledge that is not applied to hygiene behavior in practice has no impact on health. Keeping that aspect in view, the School Water and Sanitation towards Health and Hygiene (SWASTHH) project started in March 2000 by Government of India. SWASTHH is based on the applied knowledge and practices of hygiene. Under this project various, methods have been adopted by schools to inculcate hygienic behavior amongst the students like group discussion, brain storming, lecture, field trip, demonstration reading assignment and case study. The educational foundation of the SWASTHH programme is based on the life skills approach. The programme is holistic in its approach and fits in the curriculum reforms finalised by NCERT.

The life skills approach requires interaction among the participants: students to students and students to teachers. Life skills require different teaching and learning strategies. Children should be approached with teaching methods that arouse their curiosity, enhance their willingness to participate actively and promote self-learning. In NCERT syllabus on health and hygiene education, various chapters have been included like washing hands before meal, brushing teeth and rinsing mouth with the aim to help children know and accept individual and collective responsibility for healthy living at home, in the school and in the community.

In 2014, The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India launched 'Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya' (SBSV) initiative to ensure that all schools in India have access to separate functional toilets for boys and girls. The initiative also has its emphasis on promoting safe and appropriate hygiene practices and behavior among children in schools. The Swachh Vidyalaya initiative has redefined the SWASTHH as far more than a construction programme. Its global objectives focus both on education and quality of life. SWASTHH seeks to develop, test and successfully demonstrate replicable models for hygiene education, water supply and environmental sanitation in rural primary schools and anganwadis for pre-school children.

Besides, UNICEF has developed the Child Friendly Schools (CFS) Manual, a reference document and practical guidebook to help countries implement CFS models appropriate to their specific circumstances. The CFS approach to education guarantees all children the right to schools that are safe and protective, that offer potable drinking water, hand-washing facilities and clean, safe toilets. In child-friendly schools, children learn about hygiene and how to protect themselves and their families from infectious diseases. As a companion to the Child Friendly Schools Manual, this module provides a guide to promoting WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene) through curriculum and classroom practices. It is intended as general guidance adaptable to particular context and settings.

However, the Ministry of Human Resource Development was assigned to observe Swachhata Pakhwada from 1st September to 15th September, 2016. The Department of School Education & Literacy has made all efforts for effective observance of the Swachhata Pakhwada. Swachhata Pakhwada was celebrated in various schools/ institutes of Government, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Navodaya Vidyalaya, NIOS, NCERT and JSS and also in the premises of the Ministry. Schools have undertaken various activities like competitions on Swachhata essay writing, painting, debate, displaying banners, slogan writing, and creating awareness to school children and public through audio-visual programmes under Swachhata Pakhwada. Swachhata initiatives of the Ministry will result in improvement in health & hygiene practices of children, their families & communities. Inclusion of health & hygiene in the curriculum & teaching methods leads to improvement in children's health, school enrolment, attendance and retention especially of girl child. Healthy and well-nourished children can fully participate in school and get the most from the education.

### **States Contribution towards Hygiene Education**

In Kerala SSHE program is executed through health club. A school health club has 30 to 50 members. Five girls and five boys can volunteer from each class. The clubs have activities on hygiene related to water, environment, food, home and personal cleanliness. School health club teachers and headmasters are trained to prepare their own action plan for school hygiene. The school authorities and the PTA together contribute 25% to 50% of the cost of the latrines and urinals in the schools. For every 60 students, one unit with a latrine and a urinal is built. However, Telangana government has launched hygiene curriculum in 200 schools. In line with WASH delivery model, each school provided consumable such as soaps; liquid hand wash, towels, buckets etc. To facilitate an effective implementation of this program, Academy of Gandhian Studies - Tirupati, Modern Architects for Rural India (MARI) - Hyderabad, Mandal Education Officer and District Education Officers have been actively involved in the Project with support from members of the local Gram Panchayats.

The partnership of UNICEF and Government of India strengthen the SSHE. In 1992 SSHE project in Karnataka covered 1600 schools complemented with the NalliKalli (enjoyful teaching method). SSHE programme in India promoted sanitation and hygiene in and through schools to bring about the behavioral change that will have a lasting impact.

In Tamilnadu, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA), project has made school sanitation an integral part of it; Considering the fact that the experience gained by children through use of toilets in school and sanitation education imparted by teachers would also reach home and influence their parents to adopt good sanitary habits. Toilets in Anganwadis and in all types of Government schools, i.e. primary, secondary and higher secondary, are constructed under the Scheme. Emphasis is given for toilets in girl schools.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, school sanitation and hygiene education has a long history in India and other nations. Evolutions of past programmes yield useful lesson that can be applied to the future. However, in many schools of rural areas and low budget schools promises of hygiene environment have not been fulfilled. In India some schools have air conditioned class rooms and dormitories whereas some other schools are suffering from insufficient water supply, unhealthy and dirty classrooms and school compound, irrelevant and insufficient hygiene education. According to Swachhata Status Report 2017, construction of school toilet has shown declining trend as compared to previous year. Educational institutions are facing many challenges in providing hygiene education like educators not making or carrying out any programmes for monitoring and maintenance of facilities, school health clubs, and parent health clubs. SSHE can improve school facilities, improve hygiene education programmes and enrich the opportunities for personal growth among children by bringing life skills into the classroom.

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