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RAPID ASSESSMENT OF INCLUSIVE WATER, SANITATION FACILITY IN SCHOOLS

BIHAR, JHARKHAND AND UTTAR PRADESH



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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Government of India set up the Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) in 1986, with an objective of improving the quality of life for people living in rural parts and to ensure privacy and dignity to women. This programme was upgraded and extended in 1999 to focus on community-led and people centred initiatives. Financial incentives were provided to Below Poverty Line (BPL) households for construction and usage of individual household latrines (IHHL) in recognition of their achievements. Assistance was also extended for construction of school toilet units, Anganwadi toilets and Community Sanitary Complexes (CSC) apart from undertaking activities under Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM). It was rechristened to 'Total Sanitation Campaign' (TSC).

As a follow up, the Government of India launched the Nirmal Gram Puruskar (NGP) to recognise the achievements and efforts made in ensuring full sanitation coverage.

This program was successful in bringing about a movement across communities to attain the 'Nirmal' (which literally translates to 'pure') status. The NGP was further upgraded to the present '**Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan**' (NBA). The objective is to accelerate the sanitation coverage in the rural areas so as to comprehensively cover the rural community through renewed strategies and saturation approach.

The NBA (among other things) seeks to provide sanitation facilities in Government schools and Anganwadis within Gram Panchayats. The idea is to promote hygiene education and sanitary habits among schools and students while targeting a change in mind-sets and habits. These students would indirectly share these practices with their parents and hence bring about changes at the household level.

According to the government dictat, a few notable points:

- **Overview:** All types of Government Schools i.e. Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and Anganwadis should have toilets constructed.
Emphasis should be given on toilets for girls in Schools.
- **Funding:** Funding for School Sanitation in a NBA Project is provided by the Central and State Government in the ratio of 70:30.
 - Accordingly the Central assistance per unit will be restricted to 70 percent for a unit cost of Rs.35,000 (Rs.38,500 in case of hilly and difficult areas).
 - State/UT Governments, Parent-Teachers Association and Panchayats are free to contribute from their own resources over and above the prescribed amount.
- **Toilet Construction:** Separate toilets for girls and boys should be provided in all co-educational schools, which are to be treated as two separate units and each unit is entitled to Central assistance.
 - The number of toilet units to be constructed should be adequate to meet the requirements of the school as per the strength of the students attending the school.
- **Toilet design:** School toilet designs should be developed, reviewed and standardized to address quality and cost concerns and more importantly to comply with benchmarks set for "child friendliness", "gender responsiveness" and to provide access opportunities to children with special needs (CWSN).
- **Hygiene education:** Must be imparted to children on all aspects of hygiene. For this purpose, at least one teacher in each school must be trained in hygiene education, who in turn should train the children through interesting activities and community projects that emphasize hygienic behaviour.
 - The expenditure for this purpose can be met from the IEC (Information, Education and Communication) fund earmarked for the project.

- The district and Panchayat implementing agencies should ensure good coordination with Department of Education and Health & other partners in order to fulfil the objective of SSHE i.e. to provide a safe, healthy learning environment to all children.

Statistics for Sampled States

The National Education Policy categorically emphasized on the need to improve infrastructure within schools across India in order to increase enrollment. It also specified that it is mandatory for schools to have separate toilet facilities for both boys and girls; a target to be attained by 2015.

According to ASER 2012 (rural report) the enrollment for children aged between 6-14 years increased to 96% at an overall level.

Uttar Pradesh:

- The percentage of children not enrolled in school increased from 6.1% in 2011 to 6.8% in 2012.
- In 2011 the number of girls not enrolled in schools was 9.7%, a figure which increased to 11.5% in 2012. The percentage of 'usable toilets' for girls has also decreased from 47.4% in 2011 to 43.7% in 2012.

Jharkhand

- The number of girls not enrolled in school fell by 0.1% i.e. from 6.4% in 2011 to 6.3% in 2012, while the percentage of toilets 'usable of toilets' for girls has gone down from 37.5% in 2011 to 37% in 2012.

Bihar

- The percentage of girls not enrolled in schools has increased from 4.5% in 2011 to 5.2% in 2012 although the number of 'usable toilets' has increased from 35.4% in 2011 to 42% in 2012.

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and much attention has been paid to provide basic drinking water and sanitation facilities by donor agencies in collaboration with the Government. Given the Right to Education (RTE), which entitles free and compulsory education to all students in the age group of 6 to 14 years, more children are attending school. Providing adequate and usable school infrastructure, which is a State responsibility, plays a critical role in keeping these children in school.

Children as a group are most susceptible to infections and diseases. There is research suggesting that poor and unhygienic sanitation facilities in school can worsen cognitive abilities and learning levels in students. To understand if there is a correlation between school enrollment and availability of proper sanitation facilities, we need to take a microscopic look into how children in schools grapple with regular issues of sanitation made available to them. It is important to look into issues of privacy and safety from a standpoint that promotes dignity for a girl child. For a child coping with physical and mental disabilities, additional factors such as accessibility and help available in school become critical.

There is little monitoring done in schools and a majority of information available is largely quantitative in nature, focusing on the *availability* of WASH infrastructure and not so much on the usability, cleanliness, privacy or hygiene aspect. This study focuses on two sub-groups:

- For adolescent girls a look into their regular tryst with water and sanitation facilities in school can lead us to understand whether what is being defined as 'usable' is adequately addressing their needs.
- In the case of children with special needs (CWSN), it would be important to know the inadequacies of the provided facilities to understand the extent to which wash facilities impact their school enrollment.

The objective of this study is to engage with girls in a group discussion to elaborate on day-to-day problems they face as a result of improper facilities, which indirectly impacts the attendance in the case of adolescent girls and enrollment in the case of children with special needs.

Objective of the Study

- To understand whether sanitation facilities provided in schools are adequate and usable and to elaborate on the same from a child's perspective. It will focus on whether schools with toilet(s) and water facilities adequately address need of:
 - Adolescent girls especially during menstruation
 - Children with special needs (CWSN)
- The recommendations with respect to the design will be based on the perspective of the children (Girls and CWSN).
- Validate and recommend standards for sanitation in school
- Cross verification of availability of toilet facility as reported in data (quantitative) on government online system (DISE)

Sample

A sample of 500 schools was covered across public schools in the three states of:

1. Bihar
2. Uttar Pradesh and
3. Jharkhand.

These 500 schools were split across the target audience of:

1. Adolescent girls: 450 FGDs
2. Children with Special Needs (CWSN) and/or their parents: 50 interviews

The chosen sample of 500 covered Government schools:

1. With toilets:
2. Without toilets

Out of the 500 schools, 375 headmasters/teachers across 375 schools were to be interviewed.

Survey Tools

1. Surveyor Observation

This tool was filled out for each sampled school (503 administered overall), to collect information about the school's WASH infrastructure based on the surveyor's observation and suggestions of the school teacher/authority (for certain questions). Information gathered is *subjective*.

Note: Discussed in detail in the 'Inferences from Survey Tool' section

2. Interview with Headmaster/teacher

This tool was to be administered in 375 of the 500 schools covered. However the field team administered 475 interviews in all. The headmaster and/or teacher were interviewed, based on availability to get an understanding of their view point on the schools' WASH status.

Note: Discussed in detail in the 'Inferences from Survey Tool' section

3. Focus Group Discussion

- a. Girls OR
- b. CWSN or their parent

Focus Group Discussions were conducted in 450 schools. For the remainder 50 schools, a discussion was done with the CWSN children (subject to availability) or the parents' of the CWSN child were interviewed at the child's household or in the community.

Executive Summary

Studies conducted in the recent past have shown that good Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools are critical to a child's learning level outcomes by impacting their enrolment, attendance, health and overall well-being. The Government of India has made targeted efforts to bring about an improvement in sanitation and hygiene conditions across schools in India.

The trickle-down effect of certain policies however, has been largely limited to urban areas and in theory. There are big gaps in terms of existence of water and sanitation infrastructure and their functionality and/or usability. The issue becomes more worrisome if one considers problems facing certain sub sections such as adolescent girls and children with special needs (CWSN).

WaterAid in collaboration with Outline India set out on a research study to gauge problems facing girls and CWSN in the context of WASH facilities across public schools. To delve deeper into the problems, schools were selected from some of the remotest areas in the three states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. Rather than engaging in Yes or No responses, a qualitative study was undertaken. The idea was to develop an insight into the problems children face everyday and how this impacts their attendance, interest or rather lack thereof in coming to school and constitutes issues of privacy facing young girls. Focus group discussions were conducted across 500 rural government schools.

Children in the age group of 6-14 were gathered and explained that the insights shared with us will be kept confidential and used to improve available WASH facilities in their schools. About 450 FGDs with adolescent girls and 50 interviews/FGDs with CWSN/their parents were conducted. In the case of CWSN, mostly parents were interviewed, owing to unavailability of the child or inability of the child to communicate. This was expected since a majority of the households with CWSN either do not send their children to school or the child suffers in silence, a life of exclusion.

The team of surveyors and researchers conducted FGDs without the presence of a teacher or headmaster. This was to ensure that the children shared their viewpoint without any inhibitions or fear. This method worked in certain schools but not in all. Interviews were also conducted with the headmaster and the teacher to get their opinion on a few basic variables such as funds invested in WASH, or how important investment in WASH facilities was to them. At the same time, the surveyor collected information on the sanitation and drinking water facilities in school based on observation. This was done as a means to verify what the children shared with us and what we observed in order to draw out differences in perception.

“Rapid Assessment of inclusive water, sanitation facility in schools- Bihar, Jharkhand and UP” seeks to study, validate and recommend standards of sanitation facilities in rural government schools. This is done from the point of view of adolescent girls and CWSN that focus on twenty case studies which bring out trends and special cases as observed in the field.

The FGD questions used for the study build on the previous body of work undertaken by UNICEF and incorporate certain additional questions relevant in the Indian context.

A few general trends across the 3 states:-

Regional disparities:

The sampled states of UP, Bihar and Jharkhand had certain points of commonality and yet differed in certain aspects. Incidentally, during the months of February and March, when the fieldwork was conducted across the three states, schools were expecting unannounced visits from the government

inspection team. Hence, the field teams' arrival, at times, was greeted with expected curiosity and an urge to project a pleasant image. There were other instances when the kids refused to acknowledge the lack of facilities in their school owing to fear or prior mental conditioning or a difference in perception with regards to what constitutes a good or functionally WASH facility.

Teacher and Student Behavior:

Students in Uttar Pradesh were subservient and keen on pandering to the wishes of the teacher owing to fear of being punished or reprimanded. Students had a tendency to lie about available WASH facilities. The teachers occupied a position of reverence on the school premises and their wishes were not ones to be defied. In the case of U.P. and Jharkhand, a few areas visited bordered criminal grounds and were home to anti-social elements. The teachers were well aware of this fact, and ensured they never went against the wishes of the local administration. There were cases wherein the teachers and students would leave school early, before it got dark, since it was unsafe and '*you never know what will happen*'.

Bihar was a welcome relief in this context. In general, the girls did not seem too concerned about what their teachers would think about their responses. They wanted to share with us their plight and anger at the dismal school infrastructure. They spoke at length about the lack of teaching in their school as well. The teachers were largely indifferent about the survey.

The districts sampled in Jharkhand, were remote and has dwindling water and sanitation facilities. The girls were unwilling to talk. The teachers on the other hand insisted in being present during the entire FGD. This adversely affected the quality of FGD responses. This could be because the girls were too shy to speak their mind or criticise the school in the presence of a teacher for the fear of being punished later. An additional factor was the language barrier. Students spoke in the local dialect of *Santhaali* and while they often responded in Hindi, this may have negatively affected the outcome. Again, there were certain pockets in the sample that were close to conflict areas and were fairly backward. In general, teachers were not too keen on working in these neighbourhoods and villages.

WASH conditions:

In terms of overall WASH infrastructure, stories varied from school to school and across different districts and yet most other schools were permutations of a common pool of features.

- Drinking water
- Sanitation

Drinking Water

Hand pumps were the commonly used drinking water source in nearly all schools visited. There was no distinction between the hand washing and drinking water facility and the concept of water purification was largely absent.

Problems of muddy or sandy water were common with occasional cases of arsenic or other chemical impurities. Carrying water from home was preferred by students who stayed close by. Usage of the same water for cooking of mid-day meals, owing to lack of options is an alarming reality.

The children would wash their utensils at the same water source where they would get water to drink and for using at the toilet. The lack of waste disposal facility in schools rendered the area additionally dirty and the remnants of the food post mid-day meals choke the drainage.

In some cases, the school did not have its own drinking water source and the students used the communal hand-pump which was a cause of discomfort for adolescent girls. Waiting in queue along with the boys was detested by many girls across the three states.

In some cases the community used the school water source which would make the area dirty and slippery. The school's water source in most cases becomes a communal property where villagers would wash cattle, utensils and for daily ablutions. There were occasions, of children slipping near the drinking water area as well.

The children would go to the hand pump in pairs, wherein one child would pump and the other would collect water. This was a problem for the younger children, who had trouble pushing the handle. No glasses were provided from school and the students would bring bottles from home or use the mid-day meal plate to drink water post-lunch.

Sanitation

The sanitation facilities were technically existent in almost all schools visited and yet functionality and usability was questionable.

Most schools had unhygienic and dirty facilities. Students as a result avoided using the facility altogether by going out in the open or running back home, if they lived close by.

There was no running water inside the toilet and the hand-washing source was the same as the drinking water source which is the hand pump, located at some distance from the toilet facility. Soap or ash was rarely made available to students in schools. In some cases, soap being a prized object was stored in the headmasters' office; to be 'made available' on need. Dustbins inside the toilet complex was absent in all schools visited. In the residential school, the girls need to economise on resources such as soaps and shampoos given the infrequency in replenishment. The biggest problem with the residential schools was centred on the cleanliness of toilet facilities. In most cases children had to clean the toilets along with the entire school compound either as an imposition by the teachers or a declaration by the district administration (in the case of Bihar). This was mostly due to unavailability of funds for hiring a sweeper/cleaner. The number of functional bathrooms and toilets in such school were not enough and students had no other choice but to make do. Moreover, in winter seasons, owing to lack of water heaters children had to bathe in the cold water.

Toilets were often kept locked. This was done for a variety of reasons. The teachers were unwilling to share the facility with the children, since they would render it dirty. The teachers claimed that this was done to prevent outsiders i.e. community dwellers from vandalising and dirtying the facilities meant for the school. Our team came across tales of toilet doors being destroyed, roofs being broken down, by *villagers*, an outcome verified during our visit. Some children suggested that they were forced to relieve themselves in the open, since the toilets were 'reserved' for the teachers or for 'visitors from outside' (the visiting *adhikaari*). In other cases, going outside was the only option or a practise.

Privacy was a major issue for girls who were uncomfortable using the same toilet complex as the boys. The toilet structures were often missing roofs and a tall wall of separation. Nearly all toilets meant for urination, had a two feet separation between two or more compartments. Areas meant for urination had no individual compartments or doors for that matter. Latrines meant for defecation were latchable from inside. In a number of cases, sliding the latch from outside could open locked toilets. In a few cases, the girls complained about being teased by boys who were outsiders, who hung about the school premises. This could be attributable to the lack of a defined school premises in the absence of a boundary wall.

None of the toilets we visited had lights. It was either dark and dingy or relied on natural lighting. Sometimes the ventilators were choked or positioned too low. This again raises concerns of privacy. These were toilets that had never had electricity. This was a big problem in the residential schools wherein children were afraid to use the facility during night. Often there are power cuts and the schools either do not have generators or the invertors provided remain discharged, owing to long power cuts. Therefore, children have to use candles or simply chose not to use the toilets at night.

Most schools complained about the need for a person to be delegated to clean the toilets on a regular basis. In most cases, schools get the community sweeper once in a couple of weeks to visit the school, mostly when children complain. In residential schools, the task of toilet cleaning was allotted to the students on rotational basis. Not surprisingly, the students cleaned the teachers' toilets as well in residential schools. In most non-residential schools, the children did not know who cleaned the toilets as the toilets were never cleaned. Over time, the dirty and yet 'usable' toilets would get clogged with garbage and faeces, destroying the drainage, rendering the facility dysfunctional.

Nearly no school had provisions for sanitary napkins or rags. Since the toilet facilities did not have running water inside, the children usually went home to change. Sadly, in a majority of the cases, girls avoided coming to school altogether during their menstrual cycle. If they started menstruating while in school, they would request a leave of absence from the teacher or headmaster by saying they had 'stomach ache', which was code for menstruation. Disposal of sanitary napkins was outside the school compound, in an abandoned structure or at a distance from the school, where 'no one could see', in the words of the children.

A very miniscule number of schools had been privy to a program on sanitation and hygiene. The subject of menstruation had never been discussed with the girls as such. Given the remoteness of these locations, the subject was a cause of embarrassment and not to be discussed with male members, students, teacher or family. The school authorities were mostly unaware of any program on sanitary napkins and had not been part of any workshops to equip them with skills or content to be discussed with the girls.

UP was particularly interesting. The sanitation facilities looked good from outside in a number of cases. The toilets were walled structures, had doors, and latches on the outside. The toilet complexes looked freshly painted with demarcations for 'Boys' and Girls. An inspector visiting the facility would probably get impressed. On closer inspection though, often the toilets were found to be locked and inaccessible to the children. The keys would be with the teachers or hang in the headmasters' office. Stepping inside the toilet was a bigger surprise since the toilets would be filthy and stinking.

Bihar, unlike some districts in UP did not seem to be a case of orchestrated school facilities. The facilities in Bihar were in a dismal shape and yet much cleaner than toilets in UP in general. The schools here complained about the funds not coming through and corruption at the administrative level by the Pradhan who was uncooperative in general.

Jharkhand had a string of sad stories to tell. The problems here were as basic as toilet structures missing walls, and doors and the communal water source located at a distance from the school. The teachers shared their condition of helplessness and students were too shy to voice their opinion.

Provisions for CWSN

None of the schools had any provisions for Children with Special Needs. At best, we came across ramps at the school entrance. This could be an explanation to why we did not meet many CWSN at the school. As a result, parents were interviewed to gauge insight into the problem. The parents complained about the non-existent facilities for their child and how they had not received any funds from the school. The few CWSN in schools were either autistic students or children with visual defects.

The toilets and water source were largely inaccessible to students with dysfunctional limbs. None of the

sampled schools had handrails in the toilets or any facility for self-cleaning for the child. The toilets were mostly located on raised platforms. No help was made available in schools to assist children to the toilets.

Over the course of this report, we focus on 25 case studies across the schools of Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. We explore the problems pertaining to WASH facilities through the narratives of the children and insight shared by school authorities.

INFERENCES FROM THE SURVEY TOOLS

SURVEYORS' OBSERVATION

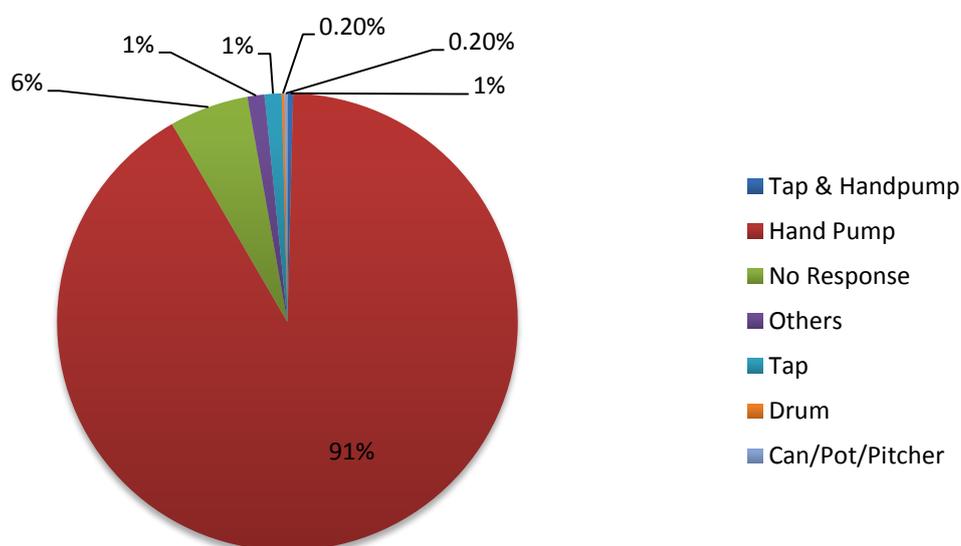
The surveyors' observation tool was constructed to cross verify the condition of WASH facilities made available in the school, as reported online on the DISE website (www.schoolreportcards.in). It was used as means of data triangulation, incorporating the teachers' and students' opinion across 503 sampled schools.

The surveyor was instructed to fill out the tool based on observation. Certain questions however, necessitated talking to the school administration and faculty. The field staff was trained to ensure parity in terms of general definitional understanding.

NOTE: Although adequate care has been taken, Surveyors opinions and hence observations are subjective.

1. COMMONLY USED WATER SOURCE

Commonly used water source across UP, Bihar and Jharkhand



Across all sampled schools, in Bihar, Jharkhand and UP, Hand Pumps were the only available source of water. There was no concept of a drinking water source as separate from the hand washing facility. The water from these hand pumps was used to prepare the mid day meals in schools. The 'Others' category potentially includes schools, which do not have their own water source or certain schools with water coolers, etc.

2. CONDITION OF DRINKING WATER SOURCE

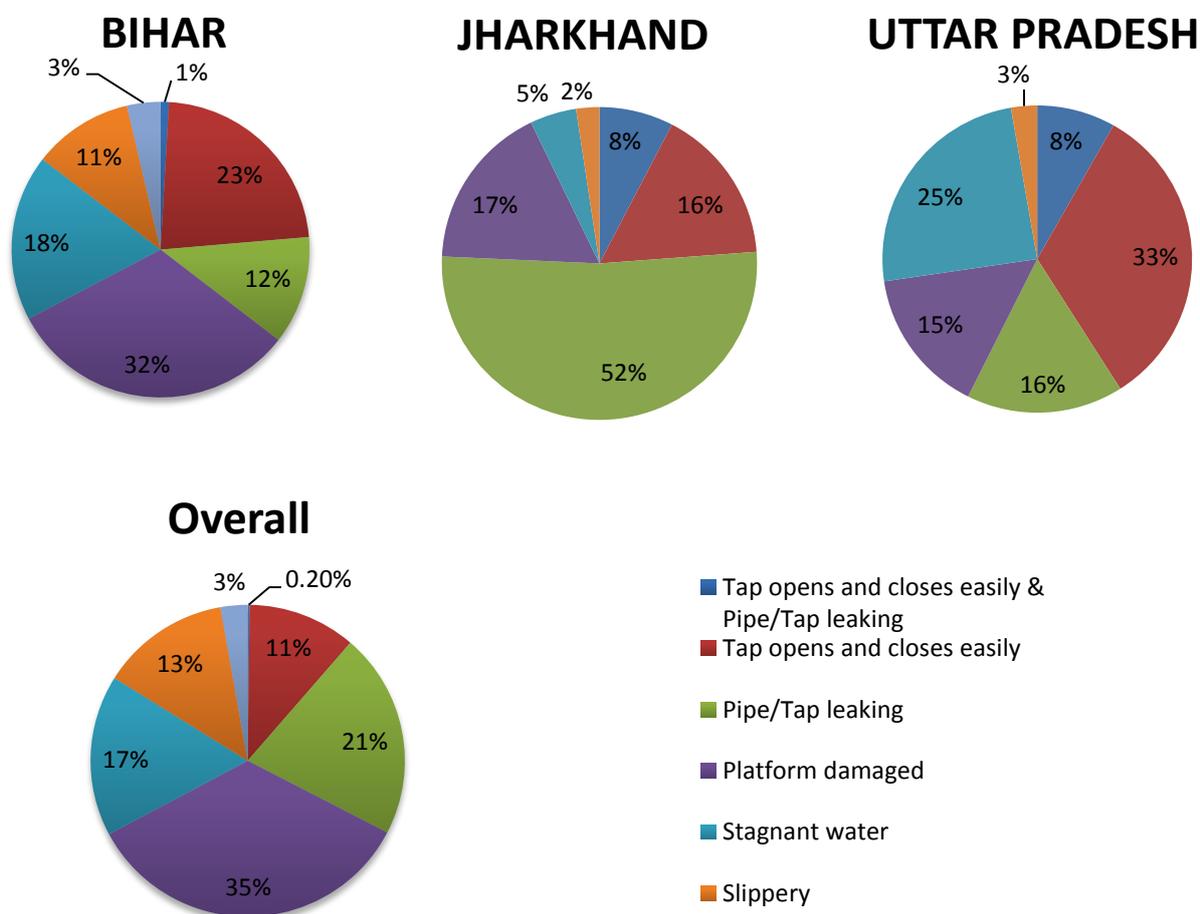
The most commonly used drinking water source across public schools surveyed is hand pump, as discussed previously. The three major issues include, damaged platforms, leaking source and stagnant water. Platforms refer to the cemented areas, in and around the hand pump.

Damaged platform emerges to be the single biggest problem in Bihar and Jharkhand. However, Bihar has a positive attribute as the hand pumps can be used easily (pulled up/pushed down).

In the case of UP, leaking hand pumps is the biggest problem followed by a slippery water source area. The latter could be a consequence of the former.

Jharkhand also has stagnant water issues followed closely by leaking hand pump problems.

This could be attributed to the lack of a drainage system. In a majority of schools visited, there was little or no cleaning of the water source. Additionally, the children use the same water source to clean their plates after mid-day meals. The food remnants amount to clogging of the area together with other garbage.



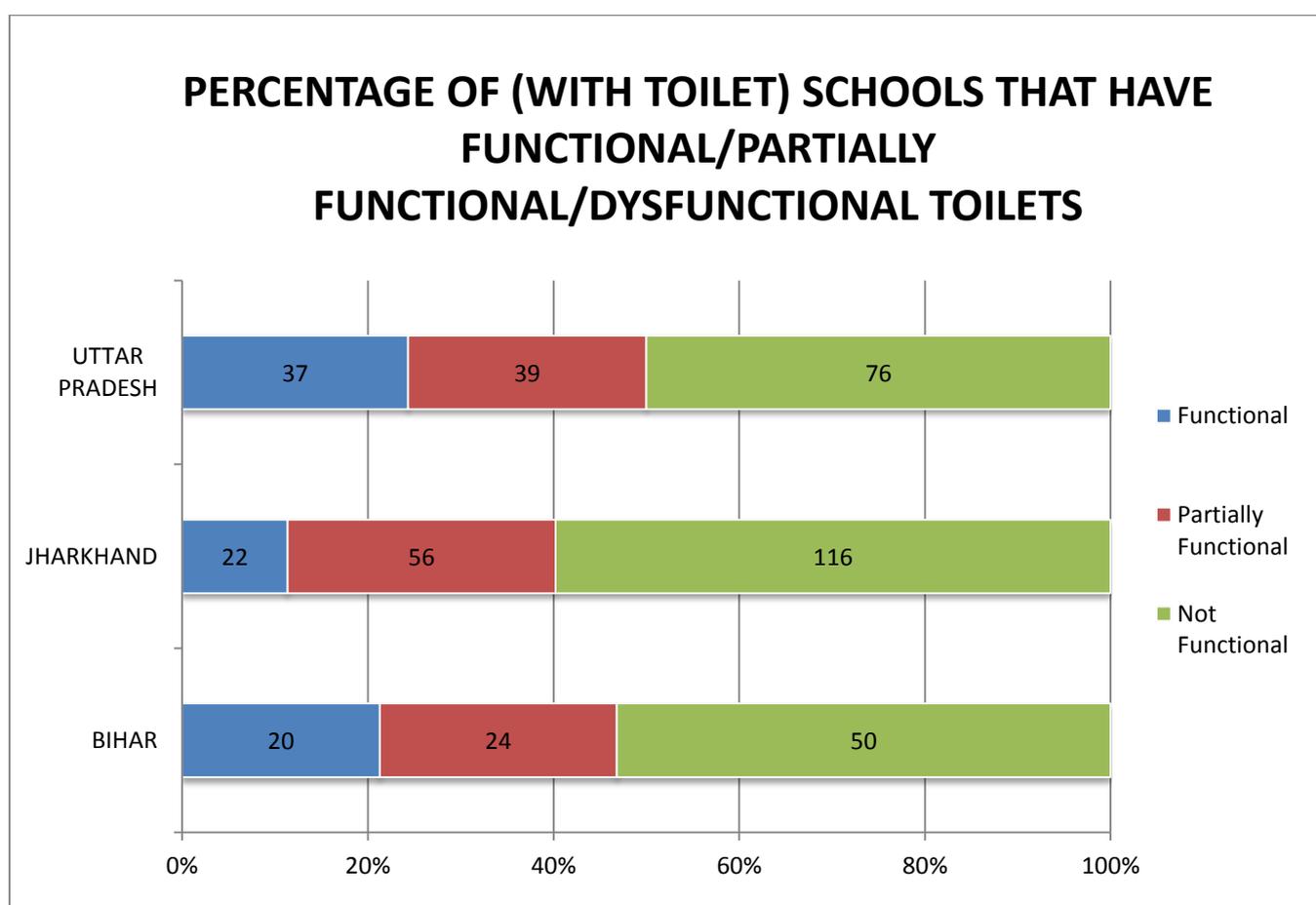
3. SCHOOLS WITH FUNCTIONAL/PARTIALLY FUNCTIONAL AND DYSFUNCTIONAL TOILETS

The definitions for Functionality in this report have been based on the UNICEF report, 'WASH in schools: Monitoring Package' published in April 2011. They are as follows:

Functional:	<i>The toilet facilities are not physically broken and can be used.</i>
Partially Functional:	<i>The toilets can be used, but there are at least some problems with the physical infrastructure (e.g. some deterioration in concrete, doors/locks coming loose, roof deteriorating, etc.) and some repair is necessary.</i>
Not Functional	<i>The toilets exist, but are so badly damaged or deteriorated it is no longer reasonably possible to use them (e.g. squatting plate broken, door missing, roof has holes, etc.)</i>

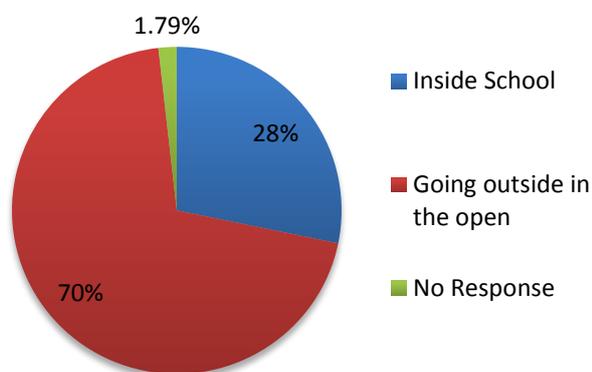
Nearly 55% of all schools (with toilets) surveyed had Dysfunctional toilets and only 18% functional toilets with the remaining 27% being partially functional.

At the state level, the conditions in Jharkhand are disappointingly low, with a meagre 11% of the schools visited having functional toilets and nearly 60% in a dysfunctional condition. Bihar and UP on the other hand have similar conditions, with figures of 21% and 24% for functionality and 53% and 50% for non-functionality in the respective states.



4. CHILDREN USING TOILETS INSIDE/OUTSIDE THEIR SCHOOL

Overall



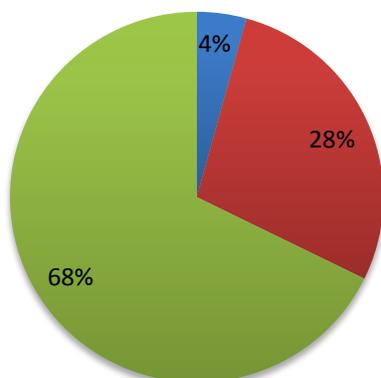
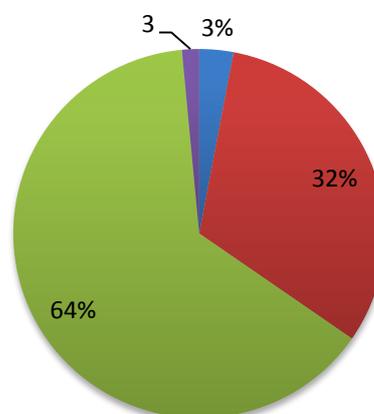
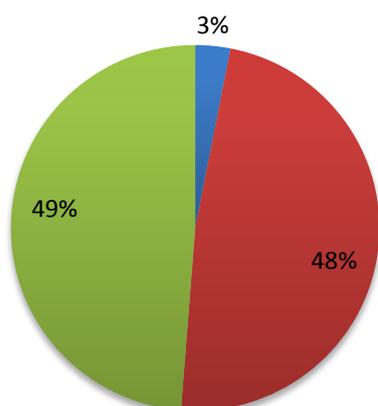
Irrespective of whether the school had a toilet or not, the surveyor was asked to find out if the children used the toilets/urinals inside their school. This was because, in a number of cases, the students went outside, in spite of having a facility in the school. This could be owing to a myriad of reasons, namely, dysfunctional toilets, dirty and/or unhygienic conditions, unwillingness to use a facility etc.

The answer to this question was uniform across all three states with an average of 70% of all children going out in the open to relieve themselves and the remaining 28% using the facility inside the school.

5. SCHOOLS WITH TOILETS THAT WERE FOUND TO BE CLEAN* AT THE TIME OF VISIT

The definitions for Cleanliness in this report have been based on the UNICEF report, 'WASH in schools: Monitoring Package' published in April 2011. They are as follows:

Clean	<i>The toilet facilities are not smelly, there are no visible feces in or around the facility, there are no flies and there is no litter.</i>
Somewhat Clean	<i>There is some smell and/or some sign of fecal matter and/or some flies and/or some litter.</i>
Not Clean	<i>There is a strong smell and/or presence fecal matter and/or a significant fly problem and/or a large amount of litter.</i>

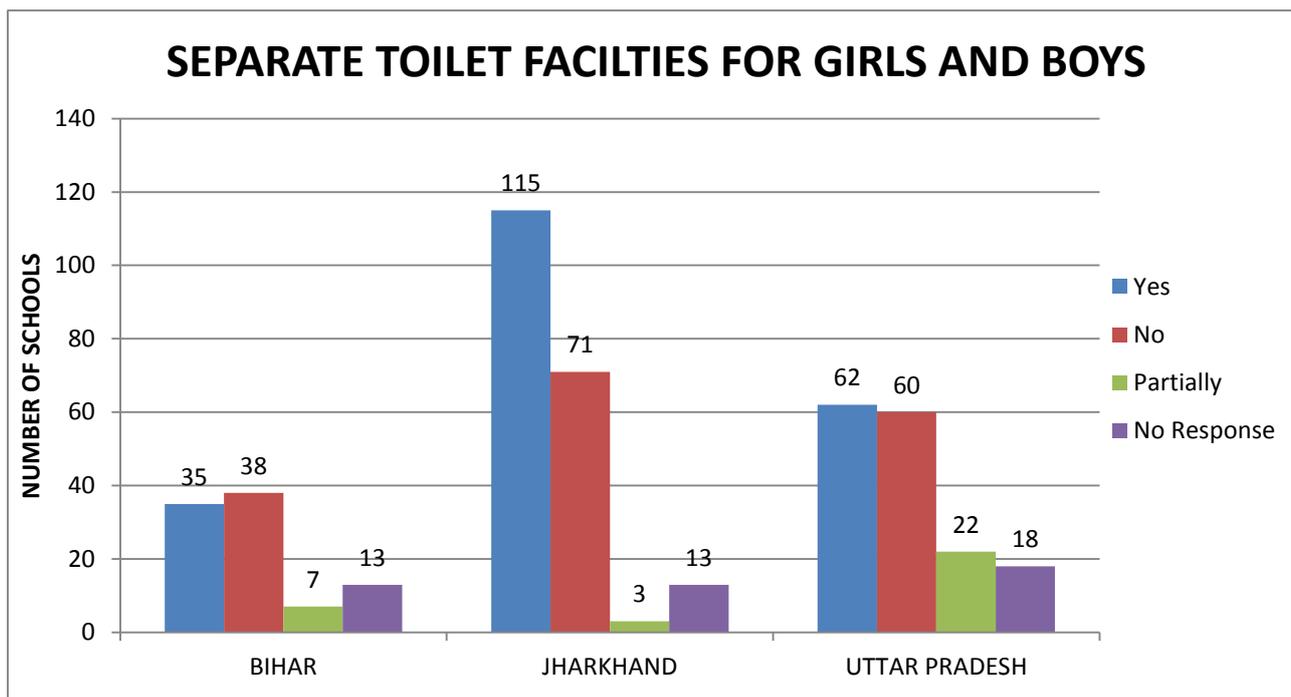
BIHAR**JHARKHAND****UTTAR PRADESH**

Bihar and Jharkhand closely resemble each other in terms of overall sanitation cleanliness, with figures for 'Clean' standing at 68% and 64% respectively.

Uttar Pradesh on the hand reports a dismal 49% figure of clean toilets with the remainder i.e. 48% toilets reported as 'Not Clean'.

6. SCHOOLS WITH SEPARATE FACILITIES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

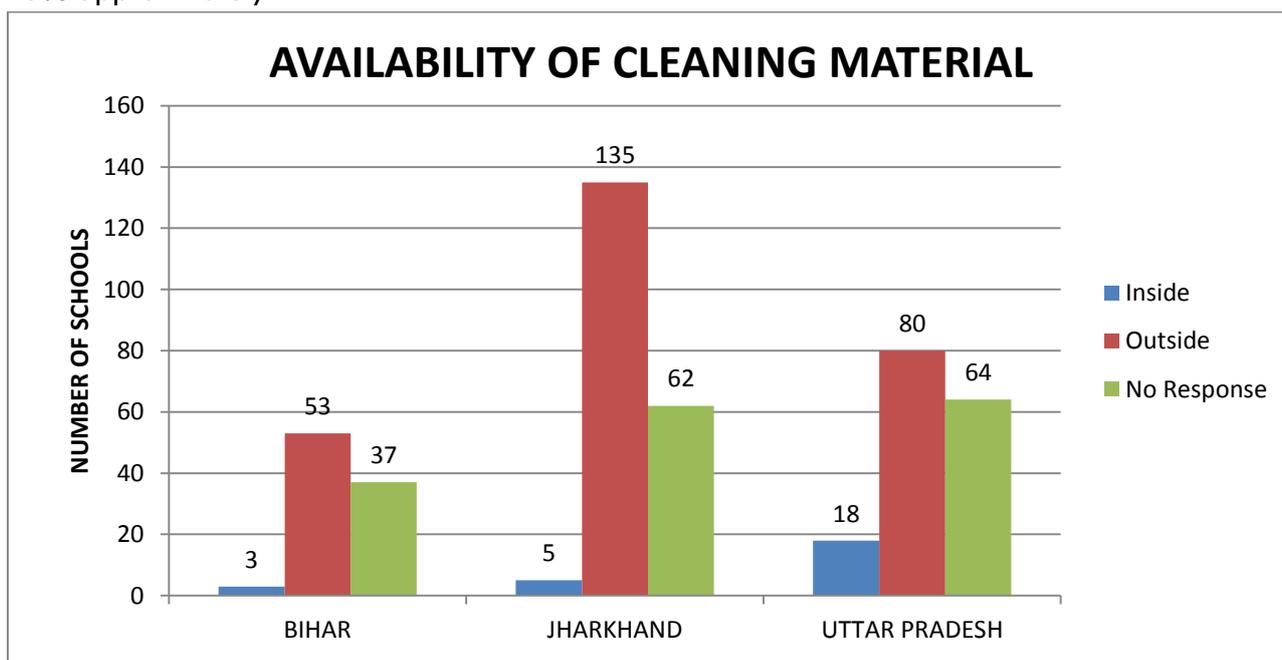
About half the schools (with toilets) or 46% of sampled schools had separate toilet facilities for boys and girls. Jharkhand fared relatively better than average in this regard with roughly 56% of schools with separate facilities for girls and boys. Bihar and UP had similar numbers for separate facilities at 37% and 38% respectively.



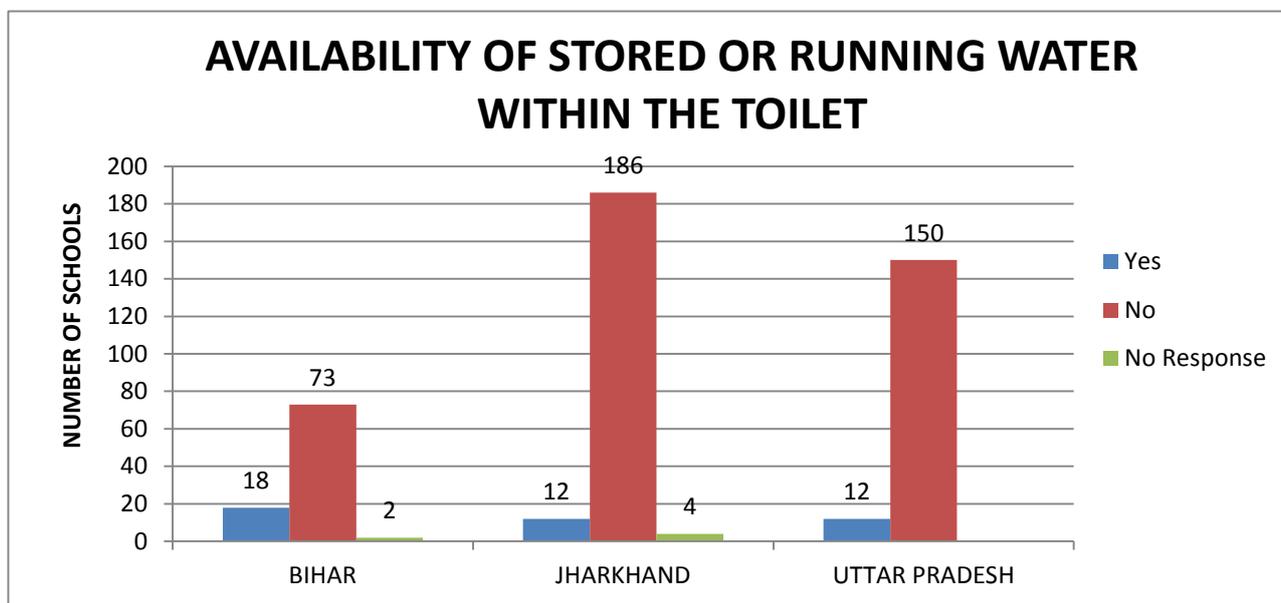
7. AVAILABILITY OF CLEANING MATERIAL AND STORED WATER

Cleaning material could refer to soap, ash, mug, brush, bins etc. inside or outside the toilet. For schools with toilets, nearly 60% of schools surveyed had cleaning material available Outside the toilet complex. This could imply the availability of one or more cleaning materials listed above.

Surprisingly, UP reported that around 11% of all 162 schools that responded to the question had cleaning material *Inside* the toilet vis-a-vis Bihar and Jharkhand with abysmally low figures of 3% and 2.5% approximately.



In a majority of schools visited, there was no soap or ash available and children used mud to wash their hands at the drinking water source, if at all. We did not come across schools, which made soap available at the hand pump. On discussion with the children, we found out that in a few schools that made soap available, it was a prized commodity and kept at the teacher's office, made available upon request. The teachers on the other hand complained that there were no funds available to purchase cleaning material for the school.

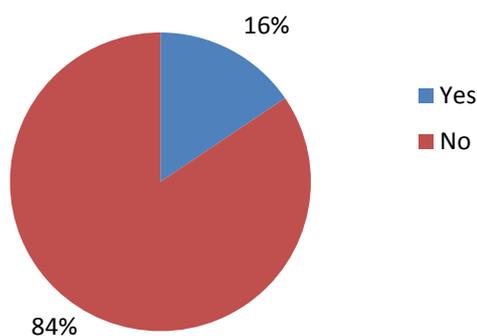


About 90% of schools visited did not have running or stored water within the toilet complex. The scenario in Bihar was better in this context with nearly 19% of schools having stored/running water inside.

We did not come across schools that had mugs or buckets inside the toilet complex either, explaining why there was no stored water inside the toilets. In some cases, children told us that a bottle or a bucket was kept near the water source and if they needed to defecate they would take the water bottle/bucket with them inside. In some cases, we were told that the children would request their friends to fetch water for them.

8. HOOKS FOR HANGING CLOTHES OR DUPATTAS

Hooks for hanging clothes/dupattas

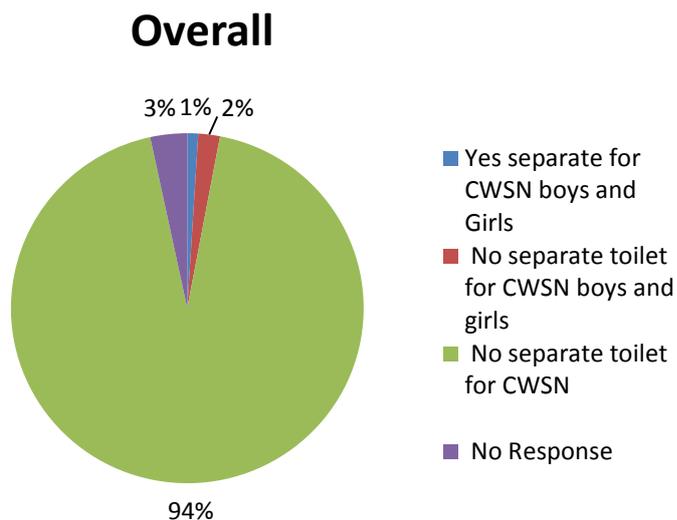


This study sampled rural schools and a significant number of children; especially adolescent girls wore *salwar kurta* and *dupattas* (Traditional Indian tunic dress with pants and long scarf worn around the neck). This necessitates the presence of a hook to hang the *dupatta* on, while using the toilet facility. It is imperative that the height of the hook be such that children of all age groups can reach it.

However, in all school visited with toilets, only 16% (71) of the 457 valid responses had hooks in toilets. Additionally, children from residential

schools complained that their bathrooms for bathing had no hooks. As a result, their clothes would often fall to the ground and get wet. Some children would have a friend wait outside holding on to their clothes, while they bathed.

9. SEPARATE TOILETS FOR GIRLS & BOYS WITHIN THE CWSN CATEGORY



The problem with respect to the WASH facilities for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) category was also a concern. In the course of fieldwork, we came across children with mental disabilities, blindness and dysfunctional limbs. However, only 5 out of the 500 schools surveyed had any special facilities for CWSN children. Around 93.6% of the schools surveyed had no separate toilets for CWSN. This could be a contributing factor to the low enrolment rates for children with special needs in public schools across UP, Bihar and Jharkhand.

HEADMASTER AND TEACHERS' OPINION

The opinion of the headmaster and/or teacher (based on availability) was sought through structured interviews conducted across 500 sampled schools with 475 complete responses. This was done as a component of the triangulation method and to develop a better understanding of the current WASH infrastructure from the teachers' point of view. Following are some of the quantifiable trends as seen across all the three states.

The following analysis is contingent upon the opinions shared by the headmaster and/or teachers interviewed in the schools and may/may not reflect the true conditions.

1. UTILIZATION OF FUNDS

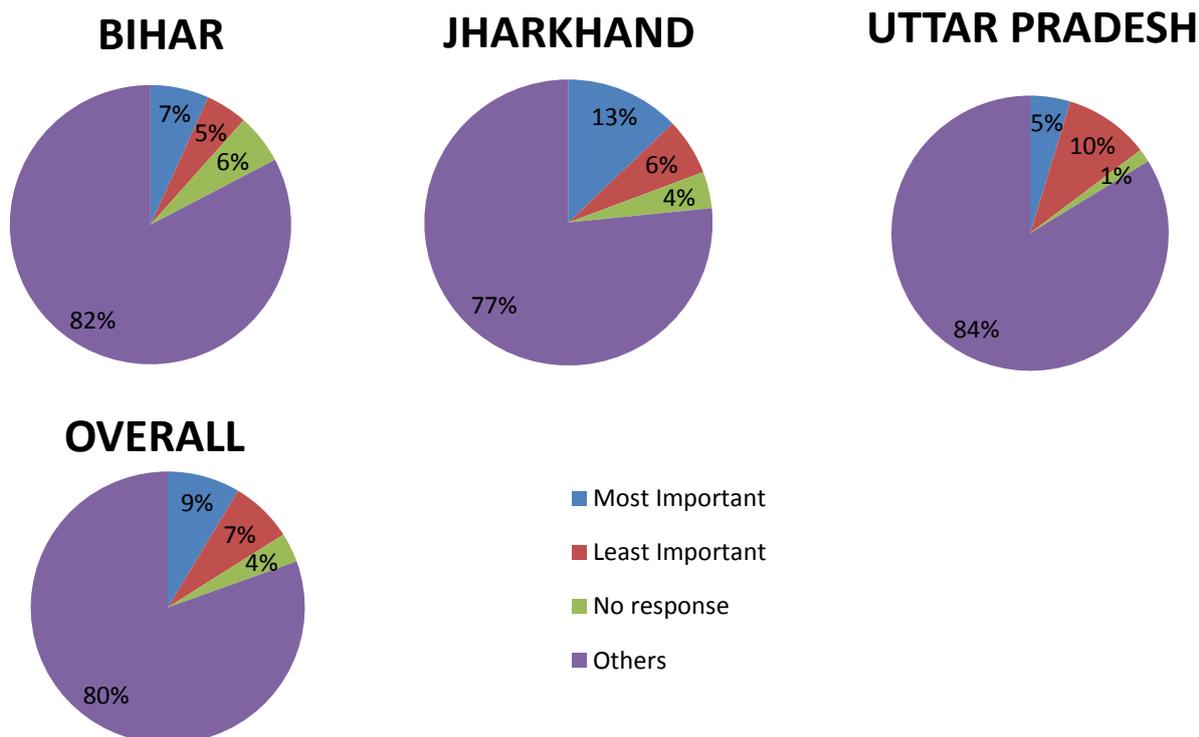
The headmaster and/or the teacher available at the school were asked to rank in order of priority, utilization of schools funds on a scale of 1-5 (1=Lowest and 5=highest). Five options were provided, namely:

- Teaching aid
- Classroom infrastructure
- Maintenance of school building
- Providing meal and other incentives to children
- Maintenance of WASH facilities

The last option i.e. Maintenance of WASH facilities was analyzed by clubbing together options 2, 3 and 4 together as 'Others' category. The idea was to understand the number of schools that considered funds for WASH as top or least priority.

Nearly 9% of all schools surveyed, deemed maintenance of wash facilities as the 'Most Important' utilization of funds with 80% teachers ranking it in between 2 to 4 and about 7% giving it least priority. Across all three states the figures for the 'Others' category are approximately the same at 82%, 77% and 84 % for Bihar, Jharkhand and UP respectively.

In Bihar, only 7% of the total number of respondents thought that the maintenance of WASH facilities was the 'Most Important' (Response=5), while 5% thought that it was the 'Least Important' (Response=1). Apart from the 4% who did not respond, 13% and 6% of the remaining respondents in Jharkhand rank it as the most and the least important, respectively. Uttar Pradesh, shows similar trends, wherein, 5% think it is most important and 10% think it is the least important.



2. RESPONSIBILITY OF CLEANING TOILETS

Around 27% of the 475 sampled schools have sweepers responsible for cleaning of toilets while 7% schools make their students clean the toilets. Nearly 54% of the schools reported someone from the 'Others' category as responsible for the task. This category includes people from the community hired on need-basis by the school authorities, cooks responsible for preparing mid-day meals or possibly someone from the school administrative staff.

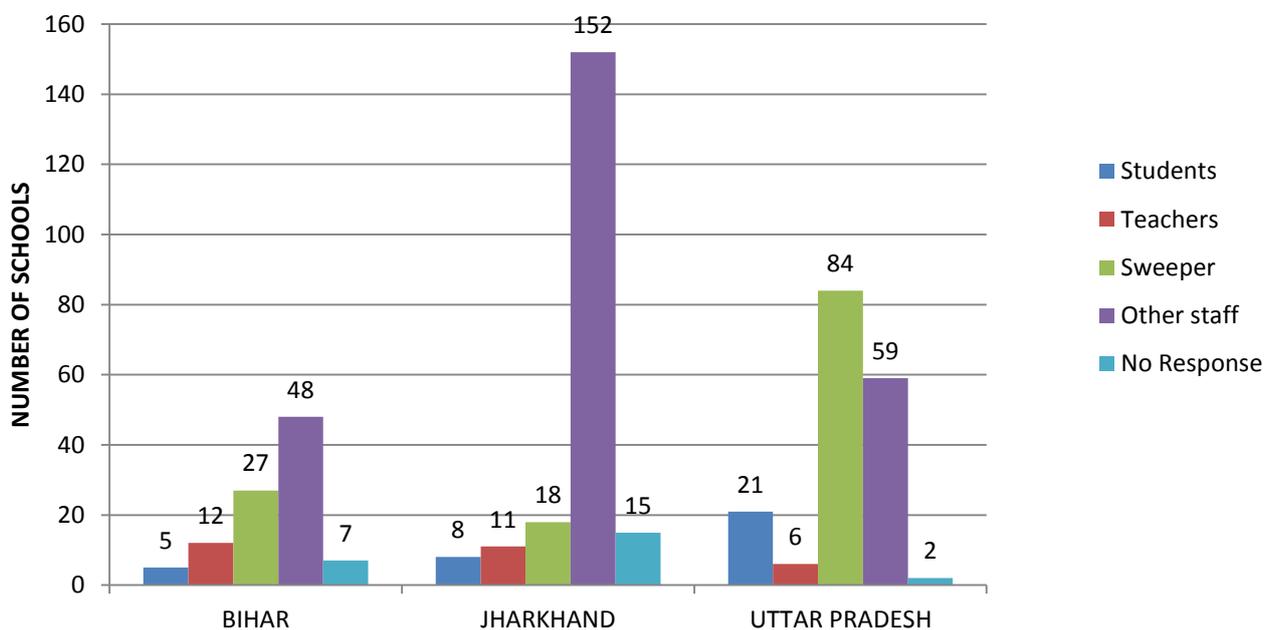
According to the headmaster and/or teacher, in Bihar, the cleaning of toilets in 48.5% schools is the responsibility of 'Other Staff'.

"In my opinion the schools need sweepers who can do, not only do the overall cleaning of the school compound but also the toilets" Anil Kumar, Headmaster of UMS Sahali Chak School, Maner District, Patna, Bihar.

In Jharkhand, a majority accounting for 74.5% of all schools said that they delegate the cleaning activity to the 'other staff'. The 'Other Staff' in this state also include members from certain communities whose caste occupation is cleaning (For eg. *domes*) or other people from the tribal population.

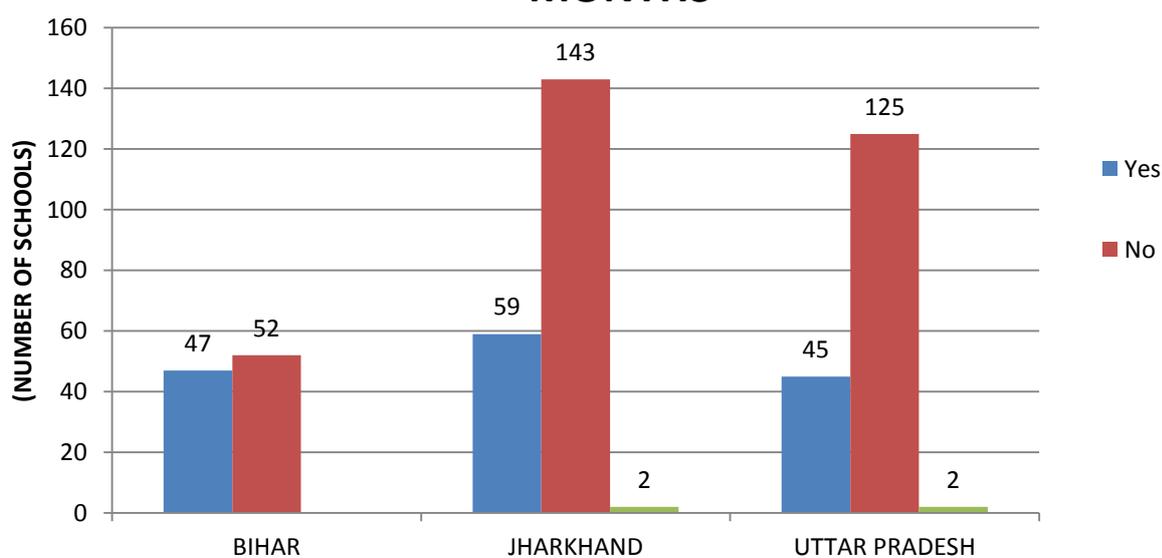
In Uttar Pradesh, things look a little better, with 48.8% schools having an appointed sweeper. Herein, 12.2% schools would ask their students to do the cleaning. It must be noted, that our team came across a majority of orchestrated cases in UP and hence the teachers opinion must be taken with a pinch of salt.

Responsibility of cleaning toilets



3. REPAIR OF WASH FACILITIES

REPAIR OF WASH FACILITIES IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS



The teachers were asked if the school had undertaken any maintenance/repair activity with respect to the WASH facilities in the last few months. About 31% of all schools had undertaken such activity and 67% had no recent repairs or maintenance expenses in this regard.

Bihar trumped the average figures with nearly 47.5% schools having had repair activity in the past few months whereas Jharkhand and U.P. slogged behind with figures of 29% and 26% respectively.

A FEW COMMENTS SHARED BY THE HEADMASTERS AND TEACHERS

“School need tanks to store drinking water, tap, a bigger toilet and the toilets should have running water facilities” – Hari Prakash Mandal, UPG M.S. BHUSKIDANGAL, DUMKA DISTRICT, JHARKHAND

“Firstly, the toilets should be inside the school premises. The toilets need a tank for water storage, electricity and installed bulbs. There should be a separate toilet for older girls and sweepers for cleaning the toilets.” – Hiralal Prasad Yadav, UPG MS PUTLI DABAR, DUMKA DISTRICT, JHARKHAND

“The toilets should have four walls and the walls should be of a good height. The older girls need a separate toilet”. – Umashankar Duve, JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL KARMANPUR, BALIA DISTRICT, UTTAR PRADESH.

“We need taps for drinking water and there should be enough funding to build CWSN toilets” – Savita, NEELKHAND BALIKAM SIHAENPUR, SAHARSA DISTRICT, BIHAR

“Hand pump must be located within the school compound. School must have a caretaker, who is delegated the task of keeping the school clean. This is to ensure convenience for students as well as teachers”. – Kung Bihari, J.H.S. NOUGON, MAHOBA, UTTAR PRADESH.

“We have the convenience of a toilet but the absence of a cleaner. For CWSN children, there should be a commode facility. The water in our school has arsenic content and we must have a water purification facility”. – Bhagwan Ji Singh, J.H.S. RUDHDPUR, BALIA, UTTAR PRADESH.

“There should be a contingency fund offered by the Government. There should be an awareness campaign for social awakening. Nurse check-ups must be organised for adolescent girls, on menstrual issues”. – Jaikant Yadave, M.S. HAAT DUMARIYA, GODDA, JHARKHAND.

CHILD-SPEAK

CHAPTER 1

The following schools represent the downside of the lack of monitoring in public schools. Certain sampled schools had no WASH infrastructure. These were schools located in remote regions and had been privy to no inspection visits in recent times. The schools had no proper building, classrooms, furniture or basic amenities. The teachers rarely showed up and the kids went to the school for the sole purpose of mid-day meals, which too were inferior in quality. The community members claimed that the village Pradhan was corrupt and the school funds never really reached the schools. These schools represent the extreme end of the spectrum and reflect upon the worrisome state of affairs in certain areas.

STATE: Bihar



■ was unique in an unfortunate way. We heard stories that we will never forget; stories of villagers recounting instances and challenges that highlight everything that is dysfunctional within the sphere of education.

As our car came to a halt and we stepped off onto the road leading us to the school, we were ambushed by barefooted toddlers, young children, and villagers. Their bare feet accompanying us to the school, stomping into the muddy road infested with

sewage, drainage, mosquitoes and garbage. Acres of field surround Gulni, a quaint village in the middle of nowhere. Nearly, all community members were farmers. This was a very poor village and what we were about to see would leave us speechless.

The school had nothing. There were two “rooms”. The brick walls had no plaster or paint. There was no furniture, no doors, no windows, blackboards, books or any material of any kind. There was no water facility. We saw something that resembled a hand-pump. It looked like it had been unused and dysfunctional for a long time. There was a room, more like a four-walled structure on the side, supposedly a ‘toilet’. It was inaccessible to us since there was no entry leading into the structure. One had to climb up a narrow five-inch ledge and it was too dangerous. Our field coordinator climbed up the ledge to click an image.

It was three in the afternoon and there was no sign of any teacher or any student for that matter. One among the many villagers who had walked us up to the school was the father of a mentally challenged child.



Satender Kumar told us, “He has been *senseless* since childhood. He cannot read or write. And his hand and limbs shiver. The shaky limbs are not so noticeable but the quivering arms betray him.”

Given the state of affairs and what was visible, there was very little left to questioning.

“Have you ever been to the school? Has the teacher ever called you to school?”

“I have been sometimes. But no, the teacher has never called me.”

████████████████████ I went more than once, and they told me my visits will not change anything or have an impact. ‘You suffer’, is what they told me. They’ll continue doing what they are doing. So, why should I run behind them then?”

“Does your child drink water in school?”

“The children told us that there are worms that come out from the hand-pump. All the children take bottles from home. You can ask. All children carry water from home.”



“Does any child use the toilet in school?”
“No child can use it, how can my child use it!”

There are a few other CWSN children in the village. Some of them do go to school as Satendar tells us. One of the children has speech disabilities. But these children are nowhere to be found. Probing helped us to find out if the state has lent some support to the parents of children with disabilities. The answer is a clear 'NO'. No one from the administration has ever visited

But nothing came from it. We filled some forms."

We probed to find out if these were people sent by the government, no one knew or had an idea about who these people were.

An angry Yashoda devi holding a toddler spoke up, "They didn't click pictures of all children. My child cannot speak. They did not click his picture. They came two-three months back. When I went and complained to the headmaster, he said, they'll take my child's name next year now."

Yashoda devi's boy goes to school every day in spite of the given conditions.



I ask, "Are the kids learning anything?"

Ram Parvesh Yadav tells us, "Nahi kuch nahi seekh raha hai. Bas bhaat khata hai, aur chala ata hai", which translates to, *No they are not learning. They just go to school, eat rice and come back.*

Satender adds, "If they are not taught anything, what will they learn. A class 6 student cannot write his name."

He further adds, “I am in the fields all day, if the child is not being taught, or if he is fighting with his friends all day, how do I know. The other day, one child comes home from school, with a broken hand, another one with a wounded head.”

All kids standing around start giggling.

The villagers have complained to the Pradhan who apparently is apathetic to their plight. They explain to us that all administrators are bribed and no complaints are ever made.

Satender adds, “We work on farms and don’t have the time to run after the headmaster. That won’t fend for our stomach. We are laborers. We do not have paid jobs.”

I asked, “Why do you think your village is more backward than the others?”

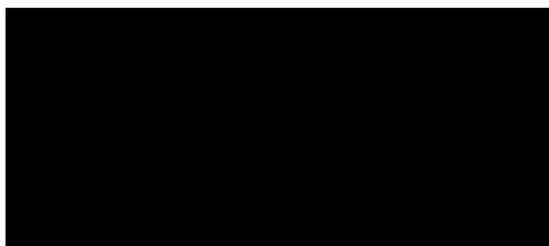
We got a unanimous response, “There is no education.”

The angry Yashoda devi continues, “He who can afford, has sent their children to a hostel.”

Satender tells us, “Its 1500 rupees.”

I ask, “Per year?”

Satender: “No, it’s 1500 per month, plus expenses on food, books etc. How can we afford it!”



Satender adds, “Our children do not want food from the school. That will not help. We want the kids to learn in school.”



An ordinary boy to look at, Vikas refused to talk. We sat next to him, and engaged in small talk. He kept looking at the ground. The other children wanted to chat up, but Vikas had nothing to say.

We asked him if he goes to school. He nodded.

We asked him to tell us his name. He did not say anything. We asked Vikas, if he likes his school, he nodded again and stared at his father.

Vikas does not have anything to say and simply smiles and stares at the field.

We thanked Satendar and decided to leave.

I asked the grown-ups and villagers if they can read or write their name. There was a loud commotion.

██████ in the interiors of Bihar, is a village of some 100-150 people where not a single adult can read or write their name

Ram Parvesh Yadav asks, “Madam, will you come back with some results or are you like the others who came in earlier?”

I smiled and said nothing.

STATE: Jharkhand

Teachers	
Male	Female
5	1

██████ village possibly the remotest area our team visited, had very little to offer. This was a school that has never had a toilet facility, and it would be some time before it gets one. We had to cross a forest area before reaching the school. ██████, in terms of location and development was cut off from the rest of the world and this reflected in the conversation we had with the children. They were extremely shy and unwilling to talk. At the time of visit, there was no headmaster and we came across only one teacher.

This teacher told us that the school timings were 11-2. This was to ensure that the children got their mid-day meal. Teaching or the lack thereof was not necessarily an issue. We were told that since there was a rule that no child could be failed till grade eight, teaching was a hardly a *problem*.

We saw a board outside which read, “11 se pehle aate nahi, 2 ke baad rehte nahi” which translates to, ‘We do not come (to school) before 11 and do not stay on after 2’.

The teacher insisted on being present for the discussion being unsure of our whereabouts. This did not necessarily make the situation worse as the children were very shy and needed to be urged constantly.

Much later, when the discussion is over, we have one child come up to us and confess, “The helpers who cook the mid-day meal do not allow us to use the hand-pump in school since they have to prepare the mid-day meal and serve it to the children by 1.”

Champakumari says, “*Bahut saara dikkat hai*” which translates to ‘Problems are plenty’ on the subject of sanitation.

The children must go outside. The school does not have a boundary wall and must walk a fair distance if they need to urinate or defecate in isolation.

The children avoid relieving themselves in between school hours. However, in cases of emergency, the children excuse themselves and go into the field. One of the children from the group tells us that they must spare 30 minutes to go far enough.



Shilpa adds, “We have to miss our classes.”

The children tell us that they are apprehended when they relieve themselves in the field. They are scared of telling us who scolds them. It might be fair to assume that it is the teachers who scold them. However, owing to the teachers’ presence, the children skip the detail. They are scared of going in the open and often get teased as well.

The teachers do not have a toilet either and must go out in the field.

Coming to school when the girls are menstruating is inconvenient and hence many students simply take leave. There is no toilet or water for self-cleaning. The children have never seen a toilet in school and possibly at home. This is a backward area in a very remote district and the threshold requirements of setting up a school are very low.

We ask the children what we can do to improve the sanitation facility in their school and the first response we receive is completely unrelated to our question, “We want a playground.”

This brings to the fore the thought process of the child and how they have made peace with the given situation, so much so that, something as basic as a toilet facility is probably not high up on their list of priorities.

A few moments later, one child adds, “We want a separate toilet for girls and boys.”

Another child pitches in, “We want a separate toilet for the teachers too.”

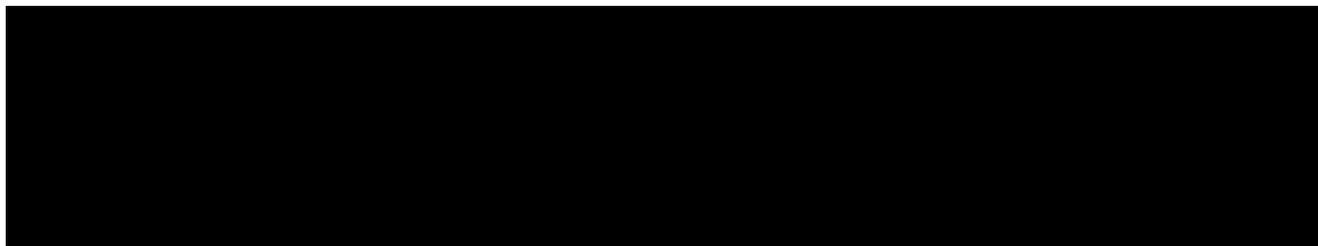
Shilpa says, “We want a tap in the washroom and soap.”

We probe to ask, who should be responsible for keeping the toilets clean but the children stare at each other in askance. After a few moments, one child says “Sweeper”.

“We want water in the toilet.” The children whisper to each other but are too shy to say anything out too loud.

“We want Phenyl to keep the toilet clean and a brush.”

Champakumari adds, “There should be a door latch.”



One child adds, “*Mann kharab ho jata hai bahar jake*” implying that it does not feel right or good to go outside. The children in Balthar are helpless in this regard and the teachers have not been able to help either.

There is no resentment in the teachers’ voice, and he lays out the facts in a monotone bordering indifference. This is a school that exists as a standalone structure, no one from outside interferes or cares about how it functions and the school and the teachers have made peace with the status quo.

STATE: Bihar



As we drove past the farm plots, we noticed that at the fringes of [REDACTED] village, a massive construction project was going on (expansion project of an engineering college). As we drove through the woods into the village and towards the village school, the first building we noticed was meant for the primary section. The upper primary school building was situated behind the primary school.

We asked three boys playing cricket in the school courtyard to show us the school toilets. Abhishek, a 12 year old boy, took us behind the school to the toilet location. The dilapidated structure overlooked the farmlands which is where the students usually went for open defecation and urination. Discarded furniture was dumped on the stony pathway. The area around and outside the toilet had faeces everywhere.

Within the structure, we could distinguish two separate compartments which we assumed were meant for boys and girls. The crowd of children were fascinated by our interest in wanting to see the toilet, laughed when asked:

“Which toilet is for the girls and which one is for the boys?”

One of the toilet doors was locked and one half of the other entry door compartment was broken down. One child while showing us the toilet kicked down a door to show us the interior. The latrine was locked and the walls that separate individual toilet units were broken down as well.

The children recounted stories about students frequently slipping and hurting themselves around the hand-washing area especially during lunch hours. “Our parents never talk to the teacher or the head master regarding this, as they are scared of being reprimanded”.

“During our menstrual days we run home if need be, otherwise we are always *prepared well*”, said Priya. “We need to carry the pad/cloth home since there is no place to dispose or wash the cloth.”

A key concern that Menu Kumari, a 13 year old 7th standard student at UMS Beraunti, shared with us, “Madam, I think that at all points in time, it should be a female teacher who gets to keep the toilet keys. How can we use the toilet when the headmaster keeps the keys? It is embarrassing to ask a male teacher”.

The kids tell us the list of things that they wish to have in the toilets:

- We need sanitary napkins in school and a safe and secure place to wash our cloth if need be
- We need soap to clean up, and
- Running water

When asked, what facilities we should make available for them?

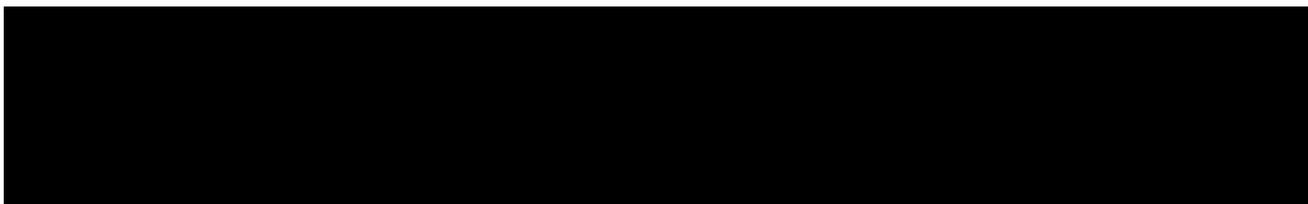
The answer was very basic: “*Madam, shouchalaya bana do*” (Madam, please get a toilet constructed in our school.)

STATE: UTTAR PRADESH

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	41	46		1	2	



██████████, a village in the interiors of Naraini block was the first school to be visited by the field team which marked the onset of the exposure trip. Sita and Sasi, the 14 year olds, are 8th standard students. “The school gets over at 4 p.m and we reach home by 5 p.m. We live far from the school”. The other children mostly stayed close by. Sita and Sasi, walk back from school together, “Together, we don’t feel as scared, as when we walk back alone. We often get teased, while walking back, so sometimes we choose not to come to school”.



“Do you ever use the toilet in school?”

Sita commented, “Never. It is only a room with a pit. It has no water. The pit is now blocked with bricks. The stream nearby, is where we get water to clean ourselves and therefore we always go there.”



We ask, “So what can we do to improve the WASH facilities in your school?”

Sasi added, “During summer, the hand-pump water contains sand and we cannot drink it. During rainy months, the hand-pump area is submerged under water. Nobody drinks from there. We get some water from home. We need some water facility which has no ‘*balu*’ (sand), and which can also be accessed during the rainy season.”

Sita giggles and adds further, “During our periods, we should be able to come to school. At present, we have only a toilet structure, with a pit covered in bricks”.

“We need something to urinate and defecate on. We cannot go on defecating in a small room, which will keep storing the feces. There has to be a drain.”

“Have you ever asked the headmaster, what this toilet structure is for?”

Sasi exclaimed, “No, never! We go into the field. We don’t ask anything for the fear of getting scolded. We never thought we could ask.”

We further question, “Where do you wash your used rags and cloth if need be?”

“We inform the headmaster that we need to go home and post lunch, we run away”.

The school has one headmaster and one teacher. The teacher has left for the day when we arrive at the school. Together, these two teachers run the two-room school and teach girls and boys across different grades. The headmaster tells us that the authorities do not care much about the village schools and requests us to do something about the current situation. He thinks our visit will have an impact and thanks us for showing up.



STATE: Jharkhand

School Population			Teachers	
School	Girls	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Primary	83		2	1
Upper Primary	5			



The tribal residential school in [REDACTED] was a pleasant surprise. The building was newly constructed and the construction was still on-going. The children spoke the local language Santhaali and we were ecstatic at their willingness to participate in the discussion. They seemed to understand the questions and we had a teacher in the vicinity to help out should the need arise. The infrastructure looked fine and yet the water and sanitation facilities screamed a different story.

There were two hand-pumps in the school and the girls informed us that many a times the water was dirty and the hand-pump did not function. Often, there were worms in the water and they avoided drinking from it. Mind you, this was a residential school and these girls were living here full time.

CHAPTER 2

In most schools visited across the three states, the WASH infrastructure was namesake and an item off the checklist of must-haves. Lack of efforts to maintain the facilities result in WASH infrastructure unfit for usage and a breeding ground for disease and filth. Schools such as Nepura bring out the overarching problems with respect to maintenance.

STATE: Bihar

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	150	200			4	2

Pooja, is a 13 year old from a village called [REDACTED] located in block [REDACTED], “Let me show you the toilet facilities in our school (laughs). There is a separate toilet for boys and girls”, and she burst into splits of laughter.

In one corner of the school building, there was a toilet complex painted in pink with a few lines written by the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan on the importance of sanitation. The first compartment of the toilet complex was meant for boys while the second one was meant for girls. The complex meant for boys was locked while a tree blocked the passage to the girls’ toilet. One could tell, that this was a facility rarely used.

The students informed us about a second toilet complex with one latrine, located right beside the hand-pump. It was found locked at the time of our visit.

Pooja, “This toilet is meant for the teachers, we have never seen how it looks from the inside.”

“Where do the boys go?”

Pooja, “The boys never go to the toilet (laughs), they go into the fields. We girls, use the toilet which is behind our school.”



“The yellow building behind the school?”

Pooja, “Yes, we go to the toilet in the college.”

“Which College?”

Pooja: (Surprised at our interjection)
“The 10+2 building. We go there when our toilets are dirty. Otherwise we usually go behind the school.”

Open urination and defecation was not an uncommon phenomenon in most of the villages we visited. But, we were particularly concerned about how children would react when we ask them whether they felt insecure in doing so.

I asked, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Does it concern you, that there might be people who come here just to watch you do so?”

Pooja (In a gesture of denial), “No, we don’t feel scared”, as if the possibility of this never struck her. “But we usually go in groups of three or four. I do not think it is a problem.”

Her articulation of the reasons for going in groups was, “We all feel the urgency (to relieve ourselves) together and therefore go together”

On the subject of cleanliness, “Do you know who is responsible for cleaning the toilets in your school? Does anybody come to clean the toilets?”

“No, we don’t know who cleans the toilets, in fact only when the toilets get extremely dirty do they get someone to clean it. We never even complain to our headmaster about the toilet hygiene because we know they can do nothing about it.”

We ask, “Tell us something, if the toilet is functional, would you still go to the field?”

Pooja exclaims, “No! If the toilet functions well, why would we need to go to the field? We will definitely use the toilet.”

On the subject of what the girls do when they menstruate, Pooja tell us, “Madam, when we menstruate we cannot come to school. We do not have provisions of sanitary napkins in school.”

She tells us that the school had the provision of soap earlier, not anymore. Somebody stole the soap long back and since then it has not been replenished.

People from the village also use this chapakal and throw all kinds of garbage around it. We really need a school boundary which will prevent the trespassers from entering the premises.”



We ask, “Is there anything about your school toilet which you think is satisfactory?”

Pooja retorts, “Is there anything in that toilet (pointing to the facility) at all that can be liked?”

We exchanged a look of understanding. Questions pertaining to functionality were rendered moot given the symbolic existence of the toilet facility.

“What do you think can make the toilets better?”

This was the first instance of a tree growing into and out of a toilet complex that we came across. The headmaster had no comments on the subject.

CHAPTER 3

Locking of toilet facilities is a common issue across various public schools. Reasons cited by the school authorities include preventative measures at their end to ward off anti-social elements or to maintain the toilet facility. The teachers suggest that the toilet keys are given to the child on need basis or hung in the school office, and locked toilets do not imply exclusion. Students on the other hand, disagree in general and are either unsure of why the facility is locked or simply do not care. Some children suggest that locked facilities are 'reserved facilities' for outsiders such as government administrators. They take the locked toilet as an indication of unavailability of a facility, implying that they must go out in the open to defecate and urinate; an act, which gives the teachers ample scope to monopolize the toilet facility.

STATE: Bihar

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Primary	135	127			7	7
Upper Primary	113	215				

_____ is a few yards away from the _____. Apart from the eighteen visually impaired children with special needs, the rest of the children are enrolled in this _____. When we reached the _____ Hostel, the Braille lessons were going on. The rest of the children were at the Upper middle school to attend their regular classes.

After we spent a few hours interacting with the visually-challenged children (Case Study discussed later), trying to gauge the difficulties they face with respect to the Water and Sanitation facilities, we thought it was essential to interact with the general students as well to further understand the interaction between the two groups of girls and the problems faced.

We came across Madhu, Rani, Roshni and Kusum who were heading towards the [REDACTED] for their lunch. The teachers helped us locate the [REDACTED] boarders amid the pre-lunch pandemonium. These children were eager to share their experiences about the school and the hostel.



The school architecture comprised of a single storey building bordered by a well-defined boundary wall. It did not have a playground or an elaborate courtyard and the toilet complex was located right next to the classrooms. Overall, the school compound was compact and seemingly clean. Right next to the headmaster's chamber was the kitchen which had a washbasin but without a running water source. There were two hand-pumps in front of the kitchen area. Only one was functional. Water was to be collected from the hand-pump and taken to the washbasin by the user.



At the time of visit, water from the hand-pump was stored in a bucket and kept near it.



When asked, the children informed us that they did not use the “Women’s” toilet since it was meant for the headmaster and the teachers and remained locked. When checked by our team, this toilet compartment seemed well maintained and clean. The children told us that all students in the school used the boys’ toilet. According to the FGD participants’, boys would usually go to the fields to urinate. During our visit to the school, we saw the boys merrily urinating outside the toilet in competition to spray all over the toilet door. The girls stood a little away and partook through their laughing acknowledgement. The game was called off when the headmaster rushed out and chastised the boys.

The children informed us that although the toilet had a water source within the toilet complex, it had never had running water. One needed to fetch water from the hand pump in order to clean it after

use. Soap or cleaning material was not present near the hand-washing area or inside the toilet. In case a child needed soap, they needed to ask for it from the kitchen authorities. They were often turned away as the cooks claimed, “They do not have time for it”, the children reported.

The [redacted] residents claimed that they would never use the toilets in school. They preferred going back to the hostel.

When asked, “Which toilet is better?” the children respond unanimously, “Hostel!”

Except for a hint of resentment, pertaining to the “higher orders” from the district authorities which implied that the children had to clean the toilets themselves (at the KGBV, to be precise), the children did not seem to have too many qualms about the hostel. This is also owing to the fact that the children had no other reference points, to enable a just comparison.

[redacted] On those days when we need to wash our hair (referring to their menstrual cycle in colloquial language) it gets extremely unmanageable and we get late for school”.

To elicit their opinion, we ask whether they think it is unfair on them to clean the toilets and the bathing area while the visually impaired children were not required to face such impositions. The expressions on Rani and Kusum's face indicate that they concur. In other words, they did find the practice unfair.

While Madhu is one reality in the school; Rani, Kusum and Roshni reflect the other end of the spectrum. Such 'impositions' are at cross roads with respect to the idea of integration among children. A small decision becomes a big factor generating inequities. While Madhu represents the concerted efforts made by the school management to induce harmony between the two categories of children (the CWSN and the general), the other kids are representative of the implications of a sudden, inconsiderate decision to terminate the sweeper. The difference between what one is able and unable to do then makes the difference explicit and becomes the basis of conflict.

The children get soaps and shampoos once every month, which they need to conserve and use for the entire month. The girls tell us that the visually impaired children are not supposed to lock the door lest they need help. They are able to close the door while bathing and yet someone needs to hold the clothes outside. None of the toilets have any hooks for hanging clothes.

Madhu explains that there are two bathing compartments. In one, the toilet complex is unclean because children urinate in it. "It has a stench to it. We need someone to get it fixed so that it becomes perfectly functional and there is lesser rush in the morning hours".

"We need to wake up at 5 a.m. during summer and 6 a.m. during winter, bathe and get ready for school. We do this with cold water".

While drinking water in their school is 'smelly' and 'yellow', as told to us both by the school management as well as the children, the water from [REDACTED]. "The problem with the [REDACTED] hand-pump is due to the drainage system. There has been a pool of water collected around the hand-pump for the last few days and we need to skip over the bricks laid out by the school authorities in order to drink water".

"The visually impaired children are helped by *auntyji*, or by us if need be. Sometimes they fall. The other day Pinky fell down when she was returning to her room after the morning assembly and her dress got wet. They cannot walk in the direction they want to go", laughs Rani. When they dirty the school toilets we tell them to clean it or we go and speak to the teacher, who gets it cleaned."

"The school basin does not have running water facility like the hostel. We have no problem in opening the tap, except for the fact that the tap on the top floor is too tight", says Roshni.

The children tell us about things they need in school, which include bulbs to light up the toilet complex, better [REDACTED]

Other than the facilities in this school, which are functional, this school brings to the fore a case of discrimination faced by the visually impaired (VI) students by their co-inhabitants who can see. Two out of four participants in the FGD resent the blind children, and consider themselves to be superior in a way. They do not think that the problems faced by VI children concerns them, if anything; it makes their life difficult and is an additional hassle. They are not too keen on sharing sanitation facilities with the VI girls and yet are forced to, given the lack of options.

Rani and Kusum recount instances of seeing the girls slip in the bathroom or falling down on their way to get drinking water. It is amusement for these children who only recently have been exposed to a process of adjustment.

CHAPTER 4

Stealing and vandalizing of school property by the 'outsiders' is a common problem across all sampled states. There are reported cases of pipes and taps being stolen from the drinking water source.

Over usage of the school water source renders the area unhygienic and dirty and often results in breakage of the cemented platforms surrounding the hand pump.

For the sanitation facilities, the situation is worse. Unlocked facilities have led to over-usage, rendering the facility dysfunctional or unusable in due course. Locked facilities on the other hand have spurred an adverse reaction of complete break to gain access.

In a majority of the cases, the over-usage and destruction seem to be an act of hooliganism and vandalism and not so much an issue of being denied access. There are cases wherein the schools' attitude borders on indifference to deal with anti-social elements, while in others the school authorities are too scared to do anything about the situation.

State: Jharkhand



School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Primary	65	55	2		6	
Upper Primary	70	22		1		

The team reached [REDACTED] why a single child was not to be seen in school on a regular school day. The teacher responded candidly by saying, that we were lucky to find a teacher. He informed us that in most hilly schools in the district, inspite of being enrolled, the children rarely showed up for classes.

[REDACTED] record did not reflect upon the reality of this school. Most enrolled children had probably migrated to other areas.



The village [REDACTED] was well connected to the weathered roads. After a 1.5 Km walk through the barren farmlands, we had to cross a river to reach the adivasi (tribal) village. The charming little houses had thatched roofs. The village school had a well maintained garden, a courtyard and a swing. Among all the schools in Godda, this is the first school we came across that had a ramp and a handrail at the entry point. The toilets in the school were located outside the compound. There were two hand-pumps which were connected to a tank meant for drinking and hand washing. The school also had a wash basin which did not have a running water facility.



When asked why the toilet complex was located outside the school compound, one of the teachers informed us that the plot of land where the school was now located belonged to a certain person. The toilet complex on the other hand could not be built on the same plot due to the dearth of space and

hence was built on somebody else's plot. The children had to go out of the school whenever they needed to use the toilet.

The headmaster also made us aware that the girls in most of the tribal schools have difficulties and are uncomfortable in fetching water from elsewhere and carrying it to the washroom because it makes the private act of accessing the toilets, public. During the FGD, the children emphasized on the need to have washing facilities within the toilet complex.

At the time of visit there were five teachers present in the school. They were reluctant to allow us to have the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he filled out the surveyor's observation tool.



The children informed us that the hand pump handle was tight and could be easily pressed. "We need a *ghumane wala nal* (referring to a tap) such that all of us can easily use it". The children needed someone to accompany them in order to fill the tank or drink water directly from it.

Like most other schools across the three districts in Jharkhand, the school infrastructure here too was damaged due to communal usage by the village residents.

The headmaster informed us that in most cases the tap gets stolen or the water tank is damaged and nothing can be done to restrict that. There is always a need to keep the toilet complex locked as an effort to prevent the trespassers from vandalising it.

The toilet had two separate compartments, with a latrine pot each. The door was wooden and could be latched from both sides. The latch inside was by no means accessible to the younger kids. The kids informed us that the toilet compartments meant for boys and girls were separate. They added that they felt the toilets should not be situated next to each other. The problem seemed aggravated by the absence of a roof in both the compartments. Further, there were no hooks within the toilet complex. When asked about the need of a hook, the children said, "We definitely need hooks in order to hang our *dupattas*, when we are using the toilet".



District: Mahoba

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	44	35				3



A beautiful location in Uttar Pradesh, the school overlooked the hills surrounding it. There were fields in the distance and the winter chill and light morning showers results in kids showing up 2 hours late to school. Given the weather and lack of electricity, the classroom was dark and we kept the classroom windows open.

The water source was a hand-pump located right outside the school classroom and there was garbage all around it. The cemented hand pump platform was in shambles and the rainy water had resulted in a mud slurry. There was stagnant water all around.

“What drinking water facility do you have in school?”

“A hand-pump. But its broken and dirty water comes out of it. There is sand in it sometimes. Cows and buffaloes drink from it and we don't like that. Pradhan does not get it repaired”.

Our star kid from the focus Group discussion, Priya adds, “When the school shuts down for a few days, or when it gets really cold or rainy, the outside villagers dirty our toilets. They climb atop the toilets and dirty them”.



We visited the toilets and it is in a dilapidated condition. The children seemed to believe that this is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and hence lighting is not an issue as such. The school has never been privy to electricity.

Priya added, “It is so dirty that we do not even want to go near it. We sometimes go home if we need to use the toilet”.

Our obvious question was, “Does the teacher give you permission to leave school and head home to use the sanitation facility?”

Manju replied, “Madam knows that there is dirt everywhere already. She is ok with it”.

Priya further added in a tone that indicates disappointment, “We have asked the cleaner/sweeper to come to school, but he does not show up. We tell madam and she asks the boys to call him. Sometimes he does not show up for months.”



A small girl spoke up, “The village Pradhan here is not good. If we tell our teacher, he comes to see Madam, fights with her and goes away.”

The children deny ever having been asked to clean the toilets in unison. This is a school with two female teachers in attendance. As we probe we find out that the locked toilet is exclusively for teachers. When the teacher comes in the morning, they unlock it and after school hours it is locked again. However, the kids do not want to risk a scolding and hence never use that facility.

In spite of the aforementioned issues, the children do not seem to think that sanitation plays any role vis-à-vis their attendance in school.

Priya added, “If we get a school boundary then the cows and buffaloes won’t come inside. Have a look madam; there are cow-dung cakes at one end, garbage and dirt in the other. The cleaners just clean the area in front of the school.”

There is no running water in the toilets and the children claim they fill up the jug usually kept near the hand-pump if they need water.

When the children menstruate they head home to change, and that is not an inconvenience for them, but a way of life. None of the children owned up to ever having changed a sanitary napkin or cloth in school. In the case of an emergency they head home.

“What can we do to improve the sanitary condition in your school?”

Children respond unanimously, “Get a new toilet constructed for us.”

The teachers asked us if the children were responsive. In the twenty odd minutes that we have been busy, they have arranged for *gulabjamuns* (sweets) and tea. We graciously accepted this as a token of their affection. They told us to go back into the city and write good things about their school. One of the teachers told me that the condition in which we see the school now, is much better than what it was a year/two years ago. We thanked them for their initiative and got back into our car.

State: Uttar Pradesh

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	57	63			1	4

As the train came to a halt, we stepped off onto the railway station to find no taxis, autos or rickshaws available in the vicinity. The only option available for transport was to take a shared auto-rickshaw to the 'hotel'.

“A majority of the teachers are scared to work here. No one wants to work past 4 pm.”

Madam Rajeshwari had only recently taken over as the Principal in [REDACTED] and she recounted in horror the tale when she first walked into the school, “The villagers were cutting a goat’s head in the school toilet.” She was shocked.

Like the other schools, there was a hand-pump here. It appeared to be functional. The area surrounding it was muddy and filled with potholes. This was a repercussion of the rain showers from a few hours ago.

Madam Rajeshwari and the girls (in the front row)



The toilet was namesake. It was without a roof. It had shrubs growing in and faeces all over. It reeked of urine and we had to tip-toe in order to avoid stepping into the faeces. Lack of a covering and the rain shower had made the situation worse. There was only one toilet available to the girls for use.



every now and then about how their teachers adored them. We assumed the headmistress had called one of the teachers beforehand and instructed the students to project a good image of the school when they spoke to us.

The girls claimed that the school authorities gave them a glass to share and drink from the pump. They said they washed it after each use. There was no soap in sight or glass for

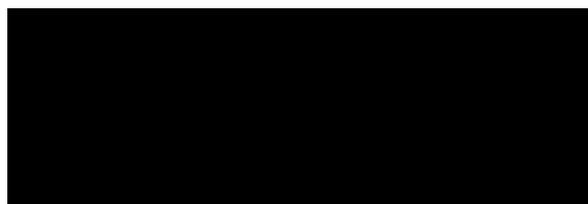
that matter. I asked if the area near the hand-pump was kept clean. Again, it was a unanimous yes, when in fact we had seen some garbage and dirt to prove otherwise.

We asked the students if they used the toilet facility in school. “Ji haan”, they chimed in translating to a unanimous ‘Yes’. I asked if it was kept clean, whether it had stored water. Again, it was an answer in the affirmative.

I probed, “Is the toilet covered from top?”

“Yes”

I cross-questioned, “When I went and checked, I saw that your toilet has no covering?”



It was surprising to see how children so young could stick to the instructions they had ostensibly been handed over, prior to our arrival. Geeta added in defence, “Madam it is probably dirty right now. When we go it is not dirty. It is dirty because it rained.”

We asked if the girls were scared of being teased by the boys, given the missing roof. They replied “No”. The children claimed the sanitation facility was problem-free, that they never relieved themselves in the field and that they had been instructed not to go out into the field, by their teachers. The children mention that the toilet for boys and girls was separate. There was no demarcation or proof for their claim.

I probed further and asked, “When you have an upset stomach, you must go into the field?”

I received a few faint responses in the affirmative and the kids looked at each other.

One girl finally spoke up, “We go beyond the boundary wall and in the field, at a little distance.”

Geeta at this point also jumps in, “there is a structure at a little distance, like a room, we go near it’.” The girls go in groups wherein the friends serve as watchdogs to avoid being spotted in public by others.

The children tell us, they had electricity in their school earlier and proper lighting in the toilet as well. But the villagers came in and cut the wires. There is some disagreement among the kids about whether the toilet had a bulb earlier. There are a few faint responses in the affirmative and a few children saying no. Geeta adds, “We had a bulb earlier but the boys broke it with their ball.” The children were lying to us. We cross question to find out if they can remember the last time they had electricity/light in the toilet. None seemed to remember.

Initially, the children continued to stress that there was nothing they would like to change about the current sanitation facility but after a few moments they started talking:

“We would like the toilet to be covered.”

“We want a tap.”

“We want water inside the toilet’.

Madam Rajeshwari tells us about the state of the school prior to her joining. She claimed the courtyard had garbage lying all over and that the villagers would come in at night and steal from the school. She pointed to a water tank in the vicinity, and walked us to one corner of the school that had running water taps once. The tank had no water now.



According to the Principal, the villagers had stolen the taps. She told us that the toilets were dirty and this was because of the locals who would jump into the school compound and make a mess. Locking the facility did not help, as the villagers had broken down the sheet covering the toilets in resentment.

She told us about the hooliganism in the village and how being a female headmistress and giving out orders was not easy. While the focus group discussion seemed fairly orchestrated, Madam Rajeshwari's words seemed credible. She reminded us once again that we were in the state of Uttar Pradesh where administration was not easy.

STATE: Jharkhand

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Primary	49	53			4	1
Upper Primary	35	30				



Another child added, “It takes us about a half an hour or an hour to get water.”

We are surprised and repeat the question, but the girls claim that it gets so crowded that they must wait for the boys to finish before they can drink.

Suman commented, “The small kids start crying.”

Bitoo suddenly added, “There should be a water tank.”

Surprisingly, UPG Dhamanchipa had a water tank but the headmaster told us that someone stole the pipe and hence the tank has not been in use. The teacher tells us that there is another hand-pump in the vicinity, about a minute away and sometimes the children use it.



Durga Nand Mishra, “We sent in a request to the block. But there is no money. Tell me, till the money comes in, how will we get things constructed? No one will pay from their pockets.”

This school has no boundary either. The toilet facility is namesake. Bitoo tells us, “The toilet is dirty and there is no space inside it. It stinks.”

There was an Indian pan but it was clogged with faeces and garbage. The door had no bolt from inside. Everyone in the school, ranging from the teachers, boys, including the girls, go into the fields. The headmaster adds, ‘The girls go a little further, in areas that are more secluded’.

The children informed us that the soap is kept inside the office room. The girls claim that if they need to wash their hands, a friend goes inside and fetches it. We infer that the children usually make use of mud to wash their hands. The soap is rarely (if at all) made available.

“What is wrong with the toilet facility in your school?”

Suman adds, “The toilet has no proper brick walled structure. No space. No water. No door”, she pauses for a brief moment and continues, “No bolt, mug, no hook.”

The children have a long list of requests. Given how there is nothing, other than the usual requests, some of them had an interesting list of things they want to see in their toilet:

“A place to keep soap.”

“We want a towel.”

“We want a separate toilet for girls, boys and for teachers.”

The girls are insecure about being forced to go out in the open and the inconvenience is aggravated when they are menstruating. They tell us that they need a facility, which is more secure.

“We want a place such that we can wash our private parts. We need a place to wash rags, a place where we can keep our things and clothes. We also need a dustbin.”

 He told us that the village has a monthly meeting wherein such issues are brought up. And this issue has come up several times, but until the money comes in, there's no point discussing this. He further added, that a few schools close by received some money and he is hopeful that UPG Dhamanchipa will get some funds too.

Mishra says, "We have school inspectors come in, and survey the school. They see the state that the school is in but nothing happens."

CHAPTER 5

Drinking water is a common problem across a number of schools. Hand-pumps are the only available water source, if at all. The presence of arsenic and other solid impurities, sand and mud are common problems. The same water is used to cook the mid day meals. In certain cases, the water source is located far off, while in others the school does not have a water source of its own and the students must use the source meant for the community.

State: Bihar

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	48	16	1		2	6

indifferent. The school had no furniture inside the classrooms, and I saw the boys jumping off the parapet, in competition.

The road leading up to the school was blocked by wheat laid out on the road to dry in the sun. Our vehicle had to get off the road and onto it again to reach the school. Kanchanpur was a microcosm, a self-sustaining unit that did not expect many visitors. The chickens ran around outside the road, and we saw two hand pumps.

so she could fill two pots. The area surrounding it was wet and muddy and there was polythene and other garbage around it.



There were two toilets in sight. One locked and the other with a broken lock from the outside.

Besides the headmaster, there were two other female teachers just lolling about the school compound. There was no teaching going on when we walked into the school compound. We went upstairs to find the two classrooms empty.



The female teacher called a few children and we introduced ourselves to the girls. We asked them if they wanted to talk to us. A few girls volunteered and they were to be the participants of our FGD.

“Do you have a drinking water facility in your school?”

“No, we do not have a hand pump in our school.”

“Don't you have a tap or some water facility?”

“No we have absolutely nothing.”

Obviating our next question, “In that case, where do you drink water from?”

“We use the hand pump on the road.” This was the hand pump a few metres away from the school that we had noticed on our way in.

“And what about the hand-pump right below your school building?”

“That does not work. It has not been functional for a long time now.”

“Did you complain to the teacher?”

“Yes, we did. They said they can’t get it repaired right now. It will get done someday.”

“Do you know when it will get repaired?”

“They don’t want to get it repaired”

“So, two hand pumps are functional?”

“Yes”

“Do you use both?”

“No the one close by has sand in it. The water becomes red. And they make the food in the school with it.”

I do not understand why the school does not use the other hand pump, at a small distance and ask, “Why don’t they use the other hand pump on the road? Is that water sandy too?”

“No. But they don’t want to go the extra distance. They say it’s far.”

In disbelief, I ask “But it’s only a few steps ahead of the one close by?”

“They don’t want to go the extra distance.”

The two hand pumps are merely 15 metres apart.

One of the girls retorted, “They can cook with dirty water but they won’t go the extra few steps. If we say anything, they quarrel.”

There is a moment of silence. “Haven’t the teachers said anything?”

“No.”

The children tell us that they get water from home and if they run out of it, they use the hand pump on the road. A majority of the girls in the FGD lived very close to the school and their obvious solution to an inconvenient water or sanitation facility in school was to run back home.

“Do you use the toilet in the school?” referring to the toilet structure we saw beneath the staircase

“No, it’s dirty, we don’t use it.”

“It is meant for the teachers. We don’t use it. We usually go home. Sir gets it cleaned sometimes for himself from the sweeper.”

The keys to this toilet are hung inside the headmaster’s office room and both male and female teachers use it.

The boys told us earlier that they simply go out in the open and this is a non-issue.

Privacy is an issue here since the school has two floors and the girls are shy of going out in the open, for the fear of being jeered at by the boys peeking out from the top floor.

Amidst a round of giggles and laughter, Seema says, "Since its open on the top, the boys start looking at us and start laughing."

Suchi recounts an interesting event when Imaam Sir went outside in the field and the boys saw him and started laughing. This drew a bout of laughter from the girls as well.

Suchi adds, "We asked madam to get us a bucket, but she never did."

The other locked toilet does not have a key but the children claim it is as bad and equally dirty. The girls tell us that the other one was locked too, but the lock was broken down.

"Does the school have a person appointed to clean the area?"

Some children say yes and some say no.

Suchi adds, "

here. If it was up to us, we would never leave it like that."

"We have nothing here. No bench, chairs, table, there is nothing here! The boys just sit on the ground and we sit on that." She pointed to a wooden plank, 2 inches in height from the ground.

The kids tell us angrily, "We asked them to teach us how to write our name, but they don't teach anything. He is scared of teaching us."

I ask if the reason is that the teacher knows nothing?

Anju says, "No they know things but they don't want to teach us anything. If we ask anything, they don't respond."

Suchi adds, "If a smart kid asks questions, the teacher just takes that as a plea to leave the classroom and go downstairs."

During their menstruation cycle, the girls prefer staying home, since there is no sanitation facility in the school. When asked by their parents to go to school, they end up coming and go back if need be. There are a few girls, who simply take four days leave every month.

Suchi, the tall child with feelings of hostility towards the school administration adds, "On those days, we simply must go home to change. We live close by. We ask the teacher."

Suchi and her sister have a toilet at home and it has all the facilities.

Given the state of disarray, a majority of the questions are rendered inapplicable. We probe to find out what would be ideal for the girls, to help improve the sanitation facilities. Given the current state, this is a clean slate.

“We want two buckets in the washroom.”

“We want a jug.”

“We want a brush to clean.”

“We want a light.”

“We want harpic.”

“More importantly, we need a hand-pump in the school so we do not have to go on road.”

We try our luck and ask if there has been a hygiene and sanitation program in school. “Of course not!” was the unanimous response.

Suchi adds, “Madam, this writing on the wall about cleanliness and water facilities is a show. The teacher who retired got it painted. He never taught us either. He would come to school for attendance and go back.”



The children are outspoken and we decide to visit Anju's household and talk to her mother.

"Some children are going to private schools, since children are not learning here", she says.

"The school does not have a drinking water facility. They take water from home. I don't know if the school has a toilet or not."

We ask, "Have you recently visited the school?"

"I have been when they called me to sign something. Anju, comes home to use the toilet facility. I don't end up paying attention. If you (referring to our team) can get a toilet constructed, then my children would be better off."

The village has never been witness to any workshop or awareness campaign. We take a peek inside the household washroom. It has a latrine, a mug and bucket. The area looks dry and the pot is clean and stainless. The clean toilet inside the household is reflective of the cognizance among households, on the subject matter of sanitation. The children may not have a toilet in school and may go out in the open, but this is primarily because of lack of options.

STATE: Jharkhand



_____ was an average school with the exception of the extreme rowdiness of the students. The building was in an average to bad shape, there had been no repairs or refurbishment in a long time and from the looks of it, the school compound had not been cleaned either. As we spoke to the girls, the boys hung around close by. The teacher occasionally stopped by to scold the children lest they crowd us; but the intention was not to discipline the children, rather to intervene if the noise was too much for the visitors.

“How is the drinking water in your school?”

“We have one hand-pump. The water from it is black in colour, too much iron. It takes about five minutes to reach the hand-pump. We usually bring water from home.”

The _____

_____ The headmaster tells us that some children get water from home, and they share it with their friends.

The children tell us that they do not have a toilet in the school. On observation, we find out that there is a structure, technically meant to be a toilet, but that's about all there is. It has no light, water, or a mug and is filthy inside. The structure is brick walled without paint. There is another area, which looks like it is meant to have a hand washing facility. Again, it does not have a basin, or a tap.

In the child's words, [REDACTED]

We ask, "Which toilet do the teachers use?"

Reeta answers in a matter-of-fact tone, "The same one. The one that's broken."

It was no surprise to the child that the teacher used the same facility even though it was in shambles. It was filled with garbage, stones and was stinking.

On the subject of what the children need, we get the usual responses of light, tap, surf, soap etc.

One child from grade 6 adds, "We feel really scared to go to the toilet." This could possibly be because the toilet was in a dark place and had no door. It was not covered. The children had recounted instances of being teased as well, and since there was only one facility and many children, maybe the children were under stress and in a hurry when using the facility.



The children tell us that it is their responsibility to keep the school toilet clean. Apparently, they are expected to clean the toilets themselves!

We hear the teacher screaming in the background again, as if trying to gather the children around.

[REDACTED] toilet in their school could be made better. On insistence upon the subject of water and sanitation, they side-track and respond with other problems like the mid-day meal scheme or issues with the classroom infrastructure. Given the state of the school infrastructure, the children share their everyday grievances that make life difficult. Water and sanitation in school is just one among the many problems and not necessarily a priority.

CHAPTER 6

Punishment mechanisms in school have long been a part of the child's socialization process. Corporal punishment is discouraged and banned in most schools due to the adverse psychological impact on the child. This reflects a significant shift in attitude for both parents and teachers. In rural areas however, punishment is still very much a method of teaching. It serves as a disincentive to bad performance in some cases and to discourage the parents or students from speaking up against highhanded authorities.

Disciplining a child was akin to physical beating or scolding. In most rural areas wherein the parent never visits or is unfamiliar with what the child goes through in school, such practises are still prevalent. As a result, children are not expressive about the problems they face in school for the fear of being punished. The teacher or headmaster is assumed to be an unapproachable person who must not be bothered over day-to-day problems pertaining to WASH facilities. In the following set of schools, the children come across as oppressed and unable to articulate problems for the fear of jeopardizing their schools' image and the resulting consequence of punishment in school.

STATE: Bihar

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Primary	64	82			3	4
Upper Primary	52	65				

“Chalo *didi*, let me show you how we can open a door from outside when someone has latched it from inside.”

Kajal and her friends lead us to the toilet complex where Kajal wants to show us how they open the toilet door from outside even when the child using is assured that she has latched it. In a mischievous

tone of condescension she expresses her efficiency at being easily able to do so. “Slide your fingers through this hole and pull the latch slowly and the door opens!”

The children burst into splits of laughter while accounting for the expressions of momentary embarrassment that they are able to generate through their acts of mischief and child play. Playfully I ask them, “What does the (embarrassed or enraged) child do? Attack you or does she not come to school the next day?” Kajal giggles and replies, “Didi, we do not usually use the toilets, we use it sometimes and whenever we open the door the child shouts!”



██████████ step out of their village, either to pursue further studies or await a proposal for marriage.

Rewa is a small village in Patna district amidst distant stretches of mustard fields. This co-educational middle school has about 263 students ██████████

██████████ from the toilet complex. They were engaged in a poetry lesson.

A few excerpts from our observation tool:

-Are the toilet and the hand-washing facility close to the classrooms? : Yes

-Is there enough privacy in the toilet complex? Is it lockable from inside? : Yes

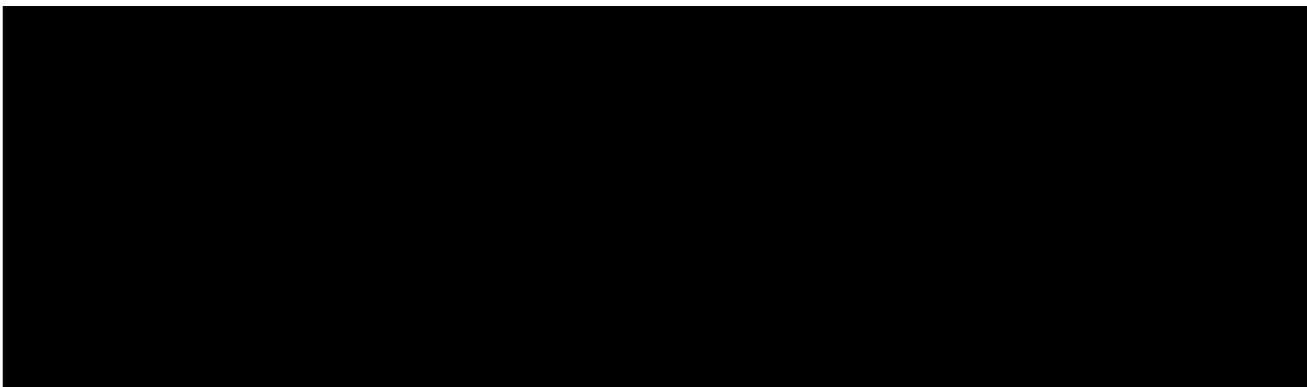
-Are there separate compartments for girls and boys? : Yes

We found ourselves caught in the crossroads of three realities owing to the triangulation method used by us to understand the WASH facilities in schools such as UMS Rewa. As a researcher, to abstract the crux of the problem from what we see, what we perceive and what the everyday looked like for these children.

As per the guidelines for the construction of toilets, a firsthand observation of the school architecture, tells us in precise terms that, there have been attempts of adhering to the three recommendations in the following manner:

1. The toilet ‘visibly’ has 2 separate compartments for boys and girls, demarcated by a physical boundary, and distinctively labeled as “baalak” (boys) and “baalika” (girls).

2. The toilet does 'show' signs of privacy, as it is lockable from inside.
3. The toilet is close to all classrooms at almost equivalent distance as it is located in the central part of the school premises, reachable from all classrooms.



Kajal articulated, “We must drink salt solution and always drink clean water, we must purify the water that we drink”.

Recollecting some of their previous lessons, we were a little surprised to learn that the children were aware of issues such as obesity and menstrual hygiene, unlike other schools in a majority of sampled districts.

We spoke with two teachers, who were not regular school employees but from an NGO. There were instructors on the subject of hygiene and admitted that the water from the school hand-pump was usually “peela paani”, i.e. muddy water with arsenic traces. During the summer, the drinking water was particularly dirty. The teacher told us that owing to such problems the children were taught to purify and drink water to prevent water borne diseases.

“Did you ask your teacher about the source of clean drinking water and how you can purify water in school (if need be), since the school has no water filter or purifying system?”

The children were taken aback, “No *didi*, we never thought we can ask about this.”

Sweety, a 12-year-old student and Kajal’s friend prompts, “How can we ask the teacher!” The students at Rewa, like many other schools we had visited, shared similar experiences of getting whipped whenever they complained.

Post lunch, on a usual day, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] wash their plate with water. The plate is used as a container to collect water from the hand-pump to drink.



The frolicking children tell us that during the rainy season, kids often fall down while the younger ones never go to fetch water for the fear of hurting themselves.

We ask, “How do you wash your hands?”

Kajal surprised, “With water and sometimes with mud.”

We ask, “What can we do to improve WASH facilities in your school?”



Kajal adds “*Didi*, we need more hand-pumps (*chapakal*) which have clean water. We need someone to clean the pedestal such that we don’t skid. We also need light in our toilet. Currently, the latrine has only a door but no ventilation.”

Talking about her menstrual days, Kajal tells us, “We usually come ‘prepared’ from home so that our white *kameez* does not stain. Whenever there is an emergency, we walk up to the teacher and tell him that we have a stomach ache; the teacher understands what we mean and go home. My friends, who stay far away, usually go into the mustard fields. What else can they do?”

STATE: Uttar Pradesh

School Population				Teachers		
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	45	45			2	



██████████ in terms of learning for the children.

A few kilometres off the highway, the car hurtled on for about five kilometres on a dusty mud road. It took us about 30 minutes to cover this short distance, owing to the narrow path. There were water bodies on the side, farmers grazing goats and villagers riding bicycles, all on the same path. The yellow mustard field was a diversion to the harsh reality of a village about a few decades behind in terms of progress.

The car could take the team only up to a certain point outside the village. In the midst of mud houses and children loitering about, a child pointed to a distance he claimed was 20 minutes walking distance from where we were. We were warned that it may not be easy to get there. A bystander inquired for a second time if we were absolutely sure of walking up to the school. He was concerned since we would have to cross a river, a dam and a swampy area to reach our destination.

Two boys led us to the school in Birauna. It was only about two in the afternoon, but we found that the teacher had already left for the day and the kids had returned home. We asked the boys to take us to the Anganwadi worker's house, and help us gather children.



We were led onto a pucca road this time, about another 10 minutes further away.

The building looked abandoned. There was no surprise in the Anganwadi worker's voice when she explained to us that it was afternoon and hence the headmaster had left for the city for an "official government meeting". Ofcourse, the school had to be shut early, and yes this was only normal.

The school had [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the passage. It was fairly dingy and just like the rest of the school it was not a space that had been used in some time.

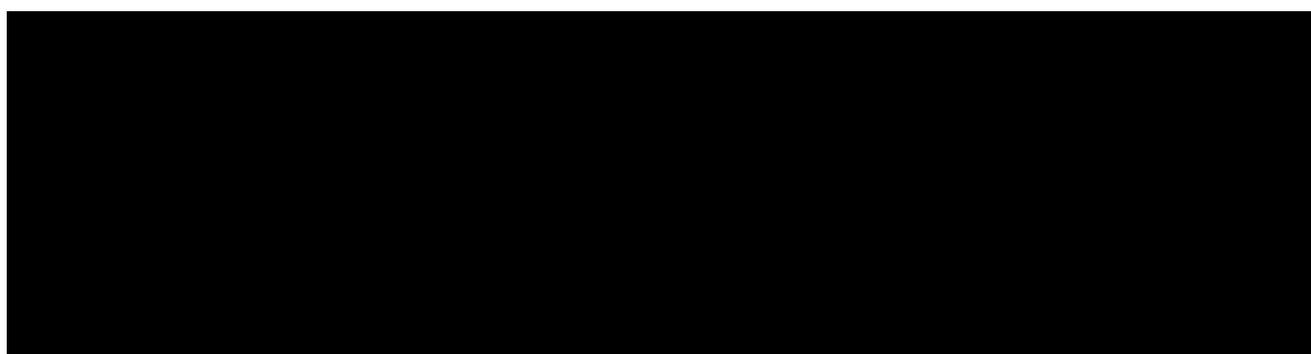
After an inspection of the school premises, the Anganwadi worker asked us to accompany her to the Pradhan's house. The village Pradhan had been made aware of our arrival and was keen on meeting the team from Delhi, the city folk.

The team trudged the fifteen minutes back to a rather large compound. There were four healthy buffaloes tied up on the side, and the Pradhan and his gang were seated in a circle with a few empty chairs laid out for the male members from the team. The Pradhan's brother wore swanky black shades, as if to impress upon us his stature.



The field coordinator from the team exchanged pleasantries with him and explained to him the reason for our arrival. One of the Panchayat members then sent his servant off into the village to gather around a few girls.

To avoid the tension, the team holding the discussion went inside the house, in an empty room. The six girls sat down in a circle and stared at the two female team members who were offered milky tea, with *Halwa* (sweet) and biscuits.



We questioned the children on the subject of being embarrassed since they did not use the indoor toilet facility. One child, Lata, who seemed to be more opinionated than the rest commented, “We have to go to toilet outside. There is nothing else we can do. I take a friend along to watch out for me.”

Half the kids in the group did not have toilet facilities at home either and did not mind going out in the open. It was considered a way of living but they did fear being teased or having a passer-by steal a glance.

“Would you like coming to school more if the sanitation facilities were to improve?”

The kids responded “Yes” in unison.

Lata added, “The kids are not good. They are the ones who dirty the toilets. They defecate and never flush. The students must be made aware about hygiene and must be taught how to keep sanitation facilities clean.”

On further questioning, about who was responsible for cleaning the facility, the girls said there was no one. They seemed to think, that the teachers never used the school in-house facility and hence did not care about its state or upkeep. There had been no discussion or teaching in the school about hygiene and sanitation. No one cared or spoke about it.

Even though there were separate toilets for girls and boys, the children used either of the two facilities (if at all) available and this fact did not bother the girls.

Since a majority of the girls were fairly young, they did not say much on the subject of menses. One girl commented, “We come to school even on *those* days, especially during exams, since we don't have an option. In [REDACTED]

“Have you ever complained to the teacher?” Lata tells us, “I want to complain. But no one else says anything. Everyone is scared of the teacher, for the fear of being beaten up. Besides, small kids may say anything and no one believes what they say. One must not say too much to elders.”

CHAPTER 7

Sarai and Sugira are examples of schools where children are either in a state of denial about the problems in their school or parrot their teachers' wishes. In both cases, the outcome of the discussion is children lying to us or staying quiet through the discussion. The denial could be a result of children being unfamiliar with what a hygienic facility must look like. The lies on the other hand could be a direct implication of reprimand to be faced, should the schools' image suffer.

Sugira in Mahoba district of Uttar Pradesh is one among the many schools under the monitoring scanner at the time of fieldwork. In most such cases, the teacher would shortlist the FGD participants to ensure best results for their school. It was observed that while the school building on the outside would be at its best, little importance was given to the WASH facilities.

STATE: Uttar Pradesh

School Population			Teachers	
School	Girls	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	150		1	5

Located off the main highway, [REDACTED] (Beautiful school) painted on the school walls. It had a fort behind it and a dog lay calmly sleeping right in the middle.

We asked for the teacher's help in gathering a few students, and in retrospect this seems to have had an impact on some of the responses we got. The students did not have too much to say, barring one child Savitri, a bright girl from grade 7. She did not know her age, but had an opinion on the WASH facilities in school.

The sole hand pump in the compound was the drinking water source. The children said it worked just fine. We probed further and they said it worked at all times, in all seasons, except for this one instance when it became dysfunctional for a few days.

We asked, "Is the area near the hand pump kept clean?"

All children spoke in sync, "Ji".

"Do you ever face any problems relating to drinking water".

"Ji nahi" i.e. No

[REDACTED]

"Who cleans the area surrounding the hand-pump?"

Jyoti answers, "The cook".

"Do you ever need to clean?"

"No".

"What about days when the cook does not come?"

"On those days, we clean it".

The children exchanged a few glances and we felt as if this was a common occurrence and not a one off instance.

"We noticed that there is some stagnant water in front of your school. Does this happen near the hand-pump also?"

All children together: "No!"

"Is the water always clean? Or is there sand in it sometimes?"

All children together replied, "No!"

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There was no lock inside. It had filth and was stuffed with leaves. The walls were dirty and there was some garbage strewn about. The children would be ill advised to use such a facility.

The children claimed that they used both the toilets. The teachers used one of those. We inferred that the locked toilet facility was exclusively for the teachers.



One kid commented, “We do sometimes use the teachers’ facility when the other facility is dirty. Madamji gets that one cleaned.”

We probe to find out if that toilet is usually locked. No, is the unanimous response.

“Do the teachers get angry if you use their facility?”; “No” is the response.

Again, we cross question, “You mentioned that you sometimes have to use your teacher’s facility, since the one meant for you is dirty. Tell us more about it.”

“It has leaves strewn around. And it smells.”

Irrespective of what we ask, we get an answer in the affirmative. The students refuse to report on how bad the situation is.



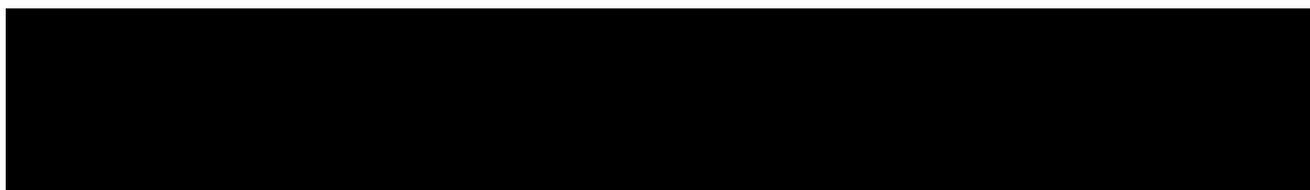
ies involved had found their ways around the framework.

The facility has never had electricity. For the first time in the discussion, our star kid Savitri speaks out, “We have no electricity in our school and the fans don't work. We had it earlier, but it got spoiled. This happens all the time in our school.”

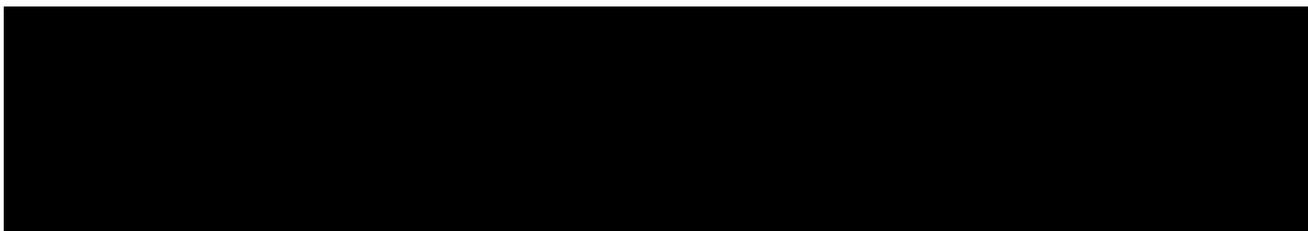
They children go to the toilet facility in pairs. Even though all kids claim they never go home to use the toilet Savitri adds, “Sometimes I go home, since the toilets here are dirty, like when my stomach is upset.”

We probe further, “What do you do if both the toilet facilities in your toilet are not functional?”

The children say, “We go home. We never go outside or in the field. We have toilets in our house.”



Savitri disagrees with Manju and adds, “They clean the school only once in a while, when someone from outside comes”. By outside, Savitri is referring to guests or visitors like us.



“What can we do to improve the toilet facility in your school?”

Savitri added, “We want the toilet to be cleaned every day. We want a light inside. We want the soap inside the toilet. We have to come outside to wash our hands”.

Another child speaks up, “We want cleanliness both inside and outside the toilet. There is so much garbage outside the toilet that it is difficult to go inside. Whenever it rains, there is kichad (mud) near the toilet.”

The girls tell us that they simply go home when they are menstruating. Savitri says that she wants some facilities in the school so she does not have to go home. She has to dispose the sanitary napkins right behind the school right now and that is inconvenient. However, this is not a complaint any of the kids have made to their teacher. We ask why, and they say, “We are scared of Madamji”.



The children cannot wash the cloth during their menstrual cycle in school, as there is no facility. This is after the kids have previously told us that they had water, a jug and a bucket inside the toilet, even though our observation falsified their claim.

The girls then begin to give us a list of things they need:

‘We want a dustbin inside the latrine.’ ‘We want a towel inside.’

‘Sanitary napkins should be made available to us right inside the toilet. Right now, it’s all in the open and we cannot change if we need to. We should be given a facility so we do not have to come out of the latrine.’

‘There should be soap inside the toilet so that we do not have to step out’. The children are referring to the open toilet area for urination.

“Do you come back to school if you go home?”

All kids say yes and tell us they make up a fake reason to go home, as they are too embarrassed to share the real reason with their teacher.



Savitri hugs me after we click pictures of the children.



STATE: Bihar

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Primary	71	76			7	4
Upper Primary	264	277				



Swati, 14 and Rani, 13 were in the 8th and the 7th standard, respectively. Swati's father was a veterinary doctor while Rani's father was a farmer. Swati and her friends were the first set of participants for the FGD. In the midst of the usual lunch-interval pandemonium, we spotted Rani and a few other kids who were eager to talk to us.

When the FGD began, Swati and her friends seemed to be overtly expressive about their satisfaction with the school infrastructure. They advocated that their school had a filter, and that the hand-pump pedestal was cleaned by the 'dai' (maid), who cooked the mid-day meal.

Swati pointed out, "The toilets are 'not-so' dirty and whenever we need to access the water-filter, we can walk into the headmaster's chamber and use it". According to the two girls, there were no restrictions or difficulties in accessing any of the WASH facilities at the school.

While Swati and her friends told us stories about their perfect school, Rani and her friends with their raised eyebrows looked at us sheepishly.



Rani retorted, "When does it get cleaned? Nobody cleans it!"

Swati replied, "Of course it gets cleaned; the 'daai' (maid) cleans it often."

We interjected to stop the two girls from having a go at each other, "Who cleans the filter?" How big is it?"

Swati, "This much", gesturing at something that could hold about 3 liters of water.

When we were at the headmaster's office, we did notice a water filter donated by a certain nationalized bank, unused and stalled up on a table.

We probe further, "Is it adequate for all the children?"

Swati says, "Of course it does, and it gets frequently refilled whenever it has no water."

We ask, "Who refills it?"

Swati adds, "The cook/caretaker. Sometimes we also do it. Water is stored in the tank. Any child can fill it if need be. The headmaster also gets it filled"

Rani seconded, "We refill the water-filter. The caretaker/cook does it too."

During the FGD, the other kids seemed clueless about what the right answer was, as they were confused about whom to side up with. Some girls said that the children who were elected in the '*mantrimandal*', a committee consisting of child-representatives of the school, got it done. Rani and a few of her friends told us that Chandan, a boy from the 6th standard usually filled it, since he was the teachers' pet. Teachers liked him and ask he ran small errands for them.

The cleaning responsibility remained with the cook who cleaned the filter at times. Some children say that the cook used lemons to clean the filter but none had ever seen her doing it. Swati claimed that since the headmaster asked some children to fetch lemons, it was probably to clean the filter. During cross-examination, I asked Swati if soap is used for cleaning the filter.

Agitated by the series of questions, she responds, “Yes they do”

Again I ask, “So after using the lemon they do the final cleansing with the soap”. An enraged Swati responds, “No, I have no idea. They asked us to get the lemons I do not know what they did with it”.

The cross examination was imperative to generate responses from the children. The series of responses would begin with an affirmative response irrespective of question and would terminate with a negative response about the facilities or rather the lack thereof.



I ask, “Do all children use the filter?”

One of the girls: “Yes! All of us do.”

A few moments earlier, we had seen all the children at the hand-pump drinking and washing their plates. There was no child near the filter in the teacher’s office.

We ask, “So if you claim that the hand-pump water is absolutely clean then why do you need a filter?”

One child responds, “No, we drink from the hand-pump as well. Some drink from the hand-pump and some from the filter.”

“Where is the filter located?”

Rani, “Inside the headmaster’s room”

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We would obviously need to seek permission. But that is never a problem!” Swati at this point was fighting tooth and nail to defend her story.

When asked if they had a toilet in their school, Rani explains that they did have a toilet but it was kept locked. “This is because children dirty the toilets the moment they use it. If need be we have to ask the female teacher, madamji, and then use it”.

A few girls tell us that the key is hung on a hook inside the teachers' office, which children can borrow when need be.

"We can all access the place where the key to the toilet is kept, except for the smaller children. We usually do the fetching for them."

The school had two sets of toilets, one each for boys and girls respectively. We were told that the girl's toilet remained closed and the key was kept with the teacher. If need be, the children could ask the teacher. As for the boys' toilet, the girls had no information. They told us that the male teachers may know about it.



Post the discussion, some of the girls came up to us, and confessed that they usually went outside to relieve themselves, behind the temple. Other children, who stayed nearby, would go home, they told us.

CHAPTER 8

In certain schools girls are vulnerable to harassment by anti-social elements that loiter the school compound. In such cases, due to the lack of basic infrastructure in the form of a school boundary wall or toilet roof, wall, or door, children face additional difficulties in accessing toilets. There are instances of teasing and lewd comments being directed at them, which generates a sense of fear and inhibition. Moreover, dearth of funds and the inability to address the problem makes the authorities indifferent.

STATE: Jharkhand

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Primary	105	65			4	2
Upper Primary	198	165	2	1		

It was their resilience and outlook that was baffling in a positive way.

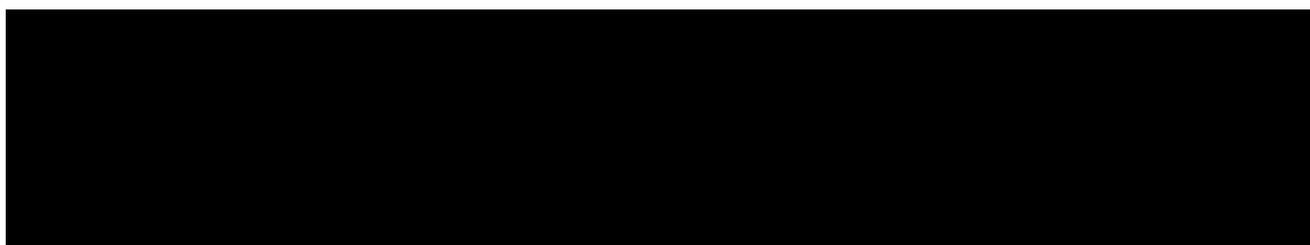
Located three kilometres off the main road, we took a shortcut and walked through the field to get to the school. The school had two buildings. One was dilapidated and the other not in use anymore. The other building was a new construct and had two classrooms. There were no gates or windows.

The school had two hand-pumps located at a distance. Neither worked too well, the only distinction being that the one close by with better quality water was usually waterlogged and had muck all around it. The children told us, “We still have to drink it. There is no option.”

“The teachers scold us if we go to the hand-pump at a distance since it takes time; so we just drink the dirty water.”

Another child adds, “The teacher tells us that we want to go to the hand pump in the distance because there are boys there.”

The girls wish that the water source were close by so they could avoid the humiliation of dealing with the ‘boys from outside’.



One child giggles and adds, “Many of us have slipped and fallen down.”

MS Dhamni has girls and boys in grades 6 and 7 but grade 8 has only girls. The school has another secondary school for boys right next to it and yet these boys would rarely bother the girls. However, it is mostly the boys from the village, the ‘outsiders’ who spell trouble. The girls tell us that there have been instances of reports to the police as well. The boys scribble vulgar lines and images on the school and toilet walls, as shared told by the children.

One girl comments, “They are wretched boys. They scribble our names and write dirty things about us on the toilet walls.”

“Have you complained to the teacher about this?”

“Yes, we have. All they say is, paint over it or scrub it out with water. They ask us to stay quiet and blame us for it. They say that it is us who encourage such behaviour from the boys.”

The sole toilet in this school for girls is namesake. The other toilets are locked. The girls are helpless and ashamed to use the toilet and this statement summarises the current situation,

“Boys come and bother us. They whistle at us, and throw bricks at us. Tell us what we are supposed to do. There is nothing in the bathroom, no roof, no door. No tap, no water. It is filthy. It is so bad, that if we ever enter it, it smells so bad that we have to go home to bathe.”

The girls clarify that boys from the school never bother them as they would get punished or suspended for it.

No running water provision or a bucket was present inside the toilet.

Afsaana further comments, “The girls who joined in grade 4 have been around for nearly four years and yet they have never seen soap in school.”

The boys have a separate toilet. If the children get an upset stomach or diarrhoea, the teachers do not allow them to take a leave. What follows is an inquisition and the teachers ask them why they showed up in school if there were getting a stomach ache.

Afsaana adds, “If we knew our stomach would ache, we would not come. How are we supposed to know we will get a stomach-ache beforehand?”

The child shares an anecdote, “During the lunch break, all kids just sit down to urinate wherever and you can see a river flowing” and the girls break in peals of laughter.

Afsana adds, “In the last three years, I don’t think the toilet has ever been cleaned.”

When the children asked the teacher to get it cleaned, they were told by the teacher to just throw in some water. The girls told the teacher that this was not their job, to which the teacher replied, “Do you think I will give 500 rupees to get a cleaner.”

Monica added, “We asked Sir where the money from the government goes to? He replied that the government does not give any money.”

These girls were bold and this was the first time we had heard of girls standing up to the teacher and questioning their intentions and usage of school funds. It was an extremely pleasant surprise. Their requests had repeatedly been shunned and shot down and yet they were not depressed about how bad the situation was.

The teachers have a separate toilet. The male teachers go out in the open. The female teachers’ toilet is kept locked and the keys are in their possession. The children are not allowed to use it. Roshni adds, “They just opened it right now for you.”

she claimed that their toilet was dirty, so we must go use the boys’ toilet. We used it that one time but it was dirty too.”

The children tell us that there have been instances when the boys followed them en route to school. As a result, they have skipped going to school altogether at times. The boys abuse and letch at these

adolescent girls, “If we tell our guardian, they won’t let us come to school. We tell mummy papa only sometimes, but never complain in school. Sir tells us to go study. But how can we concentrate?”

During their menstrual cycle, the girls do not come to school. They tell their female teachers and get leave. Their male teachers on the other hand do not give them permission to go home. They ask the girls for their parents’ telephone numbers.

The girls giggled again.

A parting comment from Afsaana in her commanding voice, “Madam, will our school undergo any change or improvement?”

We nodded as if to say yes and politely took a leave.

CHAPTER 9

Discrimination in the village and at the school level is common practices across rural India. Within the school, this could imply ill treatment of a certain type of students by the teachers. In other cases, this could mean a subset of students ostracizing another subset of students owing to differences in caste, social standing etc.

In the context of WASH facilities, often the vulnerable groups are banned from usage of common toilet or water facilities.

State: Uttar Pradesh

School Population				Teachers		
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	38	40		1	1	

One of the bystanders an ex-student from the school, told us, “Some Hindu boys come here, so our girls do not want to study in this school.”



The Junior High school does not have a toilet. There is a dilapidated structure next to the classroom and it has probably not been used in a very long time. There is so much garbage in and around it, that we can't tell if the pot exists. It had no door but cobwebs all over. None of the children have seen it in a functional state or used it. Outside the classroom, there is a hand-pump and the area surrounding it looked fairly dry.

The children have no discernible problems with the source of water. They bring a bottle from home and fill the water in it or sometimes use a plate.

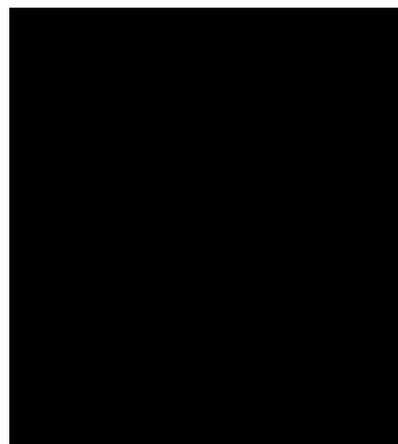


Does your school have a toilet?"

"No" is the unanimous answer.

"Have you ever had a toilet in school?"

"No."



On further probing, we found out that the locked unit is reserved for usage by *visitors from outside*. They clarified that they are referring to *adhikaris*, i.e., the government

officials.

The girls tell us that small children and some boys use the unlocked unit. The girls have never used it though.

“What do you do if you need to use the washroom?”

“We take a leave and go home.”

“Don't you miss class if you take a leave?”

“There is no teaching in our school. The school is rarely open. We just play outside.”

Sabina, the child from grade 7 wearing an abaya, tells us that the family living across the school is nice, and do not scold them if they need to use the family's toilet. She adds that she has never gone out in the open, for the fear of being seen by Hindu boys.



Zenab informs, “I take my friend when I go out in the open.”

Sabina and some of the other children tell us that they avoid coming to school during their menses. Sabina in a tone of disdain adds, “There's no door or water, nothing. How can we come?”

No one apprehends the students. There is one teacher responsible for running the Junior High school grades of 6, 7 and 8. He skips school often.

The children say that they come to school post 1 PM after attending their Urdu lessons. They claim that they themselves do not wish to come to this school; this is not necessarily an imposition by their parents.

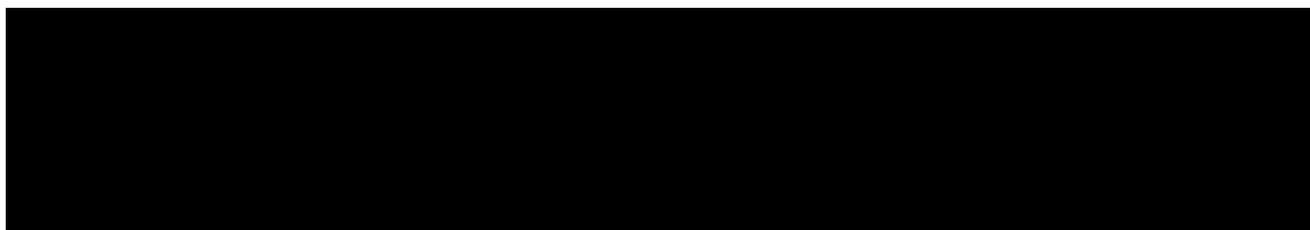
The Madarsa they claim has two toilets. That toilet has running water as well. Religion is a key variable in the lives of these children, and the Madarsa was reported to provide better overall facilities.

“What can we do to improve the sanitation facility in your school?”

“Get a toilet constructed please. It should have a tap, and a pot.”

Another child adds, “We need one more hand pump.”

“We need a door.”



We visit the boys' Madarsa not too far from the school. There are hundreds of students in the school. The teacher informed us that local communities pitch in for running the school. The girls' Madarsa is located further away from the school and the teacher points to the tall blue minaret in a distance.

STATE: Jharkhand

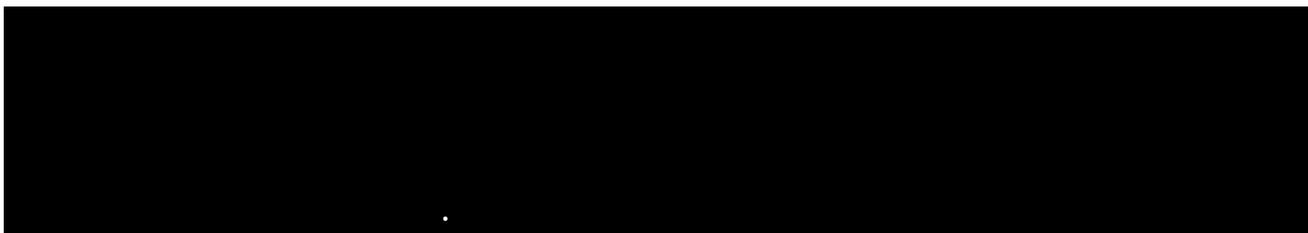
School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Primary	56	61			4	
Upper Primary	47	76				



“The food served to us in school should be good! Either there is too much salt or no salt in the food. On some days, you might get a meal and on all other days you have to go without food!”

The children and their parents looked agitated and complained that the children are not taught or served meals.

At [REDACTED], neither the mid-day meal nor the teaching was a motivation for the children to attend school. This school was accessible by roads and during our visit we found students of varying age groups sitting on rugs (as there was no furniture) attending classes together, irrespective of which standard they belonged to.



In terms of the WASH facilities, the children exclaim that they need toilets with latching provisions both from inside as well as from outside. The toilet compartments need to have a window for ventilation. There should be adequate lighting inside the compartment, a covered toilet seat, an *almirah* to keep the toilet necessities, hooks to hang clothes which might otherwise fall into the dirty pot, and toilet provisions such as buckets and mugs.

“Moreover, there should be a tank in the school which will provide running water facilities within the toilet complex so that we do not need to fetch water from elsewhere whenever we use the toilet”.

When asked if they would regularly come to school if these facilities were made available, the unanimous response we received was, “Yes! Of course we will come. We would not need to stay home even during our menstrual days!”

Owing to the current state of the toilet facility in the school, neither the teachers nor the students use it. Additionally, the school does not have a boundary wall, and the facility is at the disposal of the community dwellers.

The children tells us, “The cleanliness of the toilet is the responsibility of the “ADIVASI!” who should be hired to clean the toilets.”

CHAPTER 10

Given the plethora of problems schools grapple with on a daily basis, there were certain schools that exhibited an exceptional amount of resilience and motivation to be able to deal with existing circumstances. These were schools that had the same access, infrastructure and resources and yet their students and/or teachers worked as a collective body or as heterogeneous group towards making the most of available facilities. These stories are of children and teachers who have dealt with adversities, lack of funds, and unavailability of manpower/resources, and yet the common thread that drives them is intrinsic motivation.

STATE: Uttar Pradesh

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	36	45			2	1

The village school of [REDACTED], also known as [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] her who accompanied us in Mahoba, shared some of her experiences. She told us about the attitudinal shift she had been witness to within the sphere of sanitation, owing to concerted efforts put in by the school authorities, and by constant interaction with the community.

“To people whom open defecation is a way of life, and the idea of toilets are so alien, the construction of a school toilet made no sense”.

The [REDACTED]

“The school hand-pump located near the toilet is often used by the villagers”, complained the kids.



The school compound had the primary and the secondary sections, separated by a courtyard and a well-maintained garden. We were informed by external sources that it was the inspection period in Mahoba district and consequentially the school premises were likely to appear well-maintained.

To establish this possibility, it could be relevant to share a small anecdote to show that there were indeed some discrepancies in the facts shared by the school principal and the students. While inspecting the school infrastructure, we realized that the words 'balaak' and 'balika' (boy and girl) had been recently painted on the toilet walls. The headmaster however insisted that nothing was newly painted. He claimed it was the constant maintenance of the school infrastructure that made it appear as such.

While informally interacting with the children we asked Raju, "When did you last see the walls being painted?"

Raju replied, "Only a few days back"

It must also be noted that unlike many other schools we visited, the teachers here were keen on knowing the whereabouts of their students. During our visit, we were asked to interact and inspire the children as an effort to instill in them the importance of education. Most girls in this village were unable to continue with further education at the high school level because they found commuting to the district centre rather expensive and unsafe. It was beyond their means to afford a bicycle which could enable them to commute longer distances.

The children showed us their skills by singing to us and also made efforts to communicate that their knowledge was not limited to school text books. "Our teachers read out the newspaper in class every day, since we joined school". I asked, "Who is the Chief Minister of Delhi?" Unanimously they replied, "Arvind Kejriwal". This was a pleasant surprise.



██████████, the boys would go to the nearby field to urinate and defecate. The girls usually use the school washroom but it was not enough to cater to the needs of all the children. They would also need to use the toilets meant for the primary school, especially during the lunch hours. Sometimes they waited for the post-lunch hours when most students went back to their classes. The other toilet, which was constructed previously and was nearer to the village, could never be used since it was extremely dirty. The boys' toilet, they said, usually remained closed since the headmaster used it. The female teachers used the toilet meant for girls but they did not monopolize it.

It was difficult to understand how the cleaning mechanism within the school operated. At the time of visit, school children were seen being asked to broom the corridors of the school. The students during the FGD informed us that the lady, who visited from the district centre, sometimes did the cleaning. The cook usually did the daily cleaning, once in the morning.

The students said that they faced difficulty in closing the lock from inside. And hence they were embarrassed to use the toilet sometimes. Two children usually paired up for their toilet breaks. While one used the washroom the other waited outside.

The children also needed help from each other when using the hand-pump. One child pushed the handle while the other drank from it. The children seemed satisfied with the drinking water facility made available to them.

“A year back, the drinking water area was not cemented and we would face a lot of difficulties. We would skid and hurt ourselves. Since, this problem has been fixed and the cook usually cleans it, there are no more water puddles and algae growth.”

The children opined that when they were unwell with diarrhoea, they preferred to stay home. They were unable to articulate the reasons for this. All they said was, “We get a leave note whenever we stay at home”. This was indicative of the fact that some efforts were made by the school authorities to instil a sense of accountability among the kids. By asking for reasons for absence, the scope for the child to stay out of school is regulated.

The kids expressed some amount of fear in using the toilets especially after the lunch break when there are fewer people around. “There is a small window and not enough light. We should have light inside the toilet so that if somebody locks us from outside we need not panic as much”.



STATE: Uttar Pradesh

School Population			Teachers	
School	Girls	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	79			2

While we drove through the picturesque hilly landscape of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] taught in Jaitpur for decades. She had facilitated a field visit on a day when schools were officially closed. Given her contacts, the warden of Kasturba Gandhi School agreed to meet us.

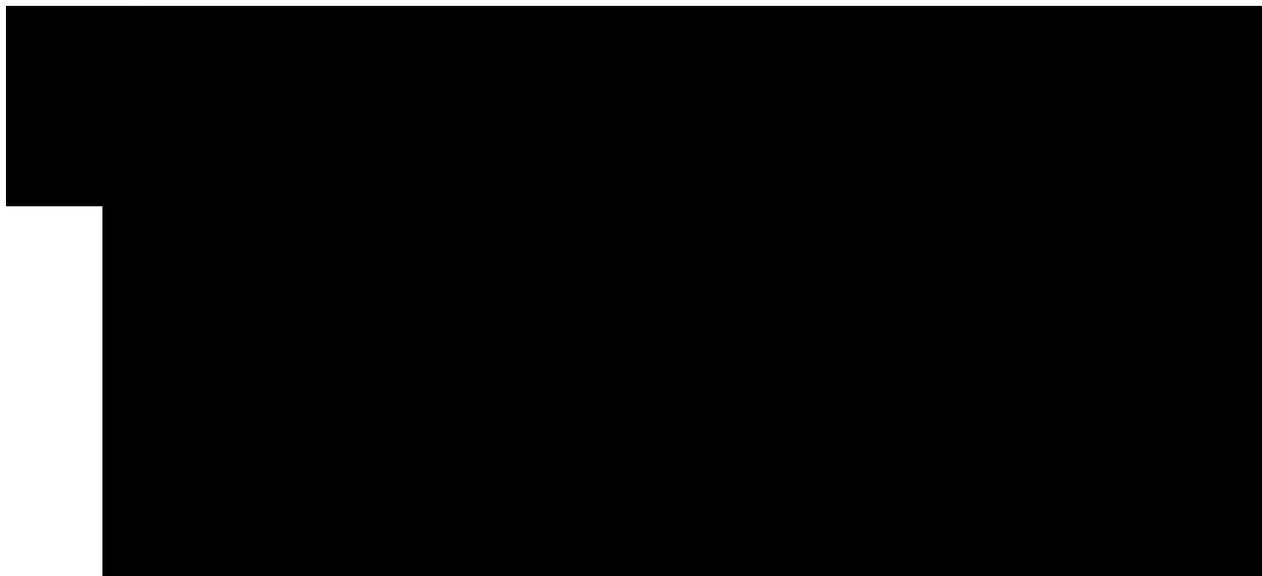
As with most of the schools in this district, the FGD participants were likely to be selected by the teachers and the children in all probability would respond as per prior instructions from their teacher, or in this case the warden.

Divya, an 8th standard, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] us show you. We drink water from here'. We were surprised to see the water cooler. 'Didi, do you know', informed Divya, the seemingly proud student of the school with a water cooler/purifier, "We always get water from the freezer."

It was interesting to note that the term 'freezer' was used as a signifier for a device, whose primary function was water purification. There could be multiple reasons as to why a 13 year old might call a purifier a 'freezer'. It could be either that the freezing property of the device held a euphoric value to the child. The statement does not tell us whether purification of water is important to the child or not. Given our understanding of the conditions prevailing in the school at the time of visit, we could infer the following:

1. Drinking water from the hand pump was common practice, since the area had a regular shortfall in electricity and pumping water to the cooler was rendered impossible. The hand-pump was located five minutes away from the residential complex, amid a swamp. The child was well aware about the concept of cleanliness, hygiene and purification by letter, but it was not a part of their everyday routine. Hence, purification of water was definitely not the priority and clearly not a practice.



4. Herein, the child does not talk about the purification aspect of the water purifier. The child's inability to identify the function of a device in use, while celebrating its exhibition value, articulates the story of most schools we visited. It was the prestige of partaking in the ownership that mattered more than the functionality of the device.



We asked, “Do you drink chilled water during the winter season”?

Divya cordially responded, “No, *didiji*, the water from the freezer is cold only during summer and normal during winter. The temperature now is same as that of the water from the hand-pump”

“Can you tell us how?”

Divya added, “Yes. Do you see the hand pump across the swamp? A pipe is fitted to the hand-pump.” We could spot the long pipe which lay on the marsh and it fed into a bucket kept near the freezer (a water purifier). “So, we fill the bucket and pour it into the freezer. All of us then fill our glasses and bottles whenever we need to drink.”



‘Do all children drink from there or do you go elsewhere. Do you cup your hands and drink directly?’

Divya responded, “No, *didiji*, we do not. Teachers have instructed us not to do such things as so many of us use the same filter. It is unhygienic.”

We head back down stairs and sit down with the children.

‘Divya, which toilet do you use? The toilet upstairs looks so clean?’

Divya added coyly, “*Didiji*, we use the toilets on the ground floor and the toilets on the upper floor are meant for our teachers. “

Mayuri, “But *didiji*, please do not share this with anyone (looking around to see if anyone was overhearing). We do not like cleaning toilets!”

Divya was startled and yet glad that someone had spoken up, “*Didiji, hafte mein teen teen ke toli lagtee hai*” i.e. two sets of children are teamed up every week, each set consisting of three children each. “One set of children is responsible for cleaning the toilets and for the overall maintenance of the school. We need to clean the toilets on both the floors.”

We ask, “But don’t you have toilets only on the first floor?”

Divya, “No, we have bathrooms and toilets on the ground floor too”

I ask, “Can you take me there?”

The children were hesitant initially, given the state of the washroom. The sanitation chamber consisted of four compartments for bathing and four for toilets. Right when we entered, there was a leaking tap and the floor was covered with water. The complex was dingy and had little ventilation. None of the doors closed and the drainage in two toilets were blocked; one with a broken broom and the other with faeces.

The children had to walk through a swamp to a hand-pump each morning to fetch water. They could never use the washroom alone at night and were instructed to take friends along, as there was no light in the toilet complex. The toilets did not lock.

Of the eight toilet compartments, three were functional, two for bathing and only one latrine. This was the facility available in a school that housed 50 boarders.

The water freezer right in front of the school building was impressive to any enumerator who came in to take notes via mere observation. This school definitely scored way above all the others that had a hand-pump on campus. The architecture of the school was an interesting embodiment of what the authorities need to tell and what they need to conceal. The water filter located at the school entry projected an image of ‘improved’ facilities in comparison to the other schools in the village.

She further adds, “There are mosquitoes, because we have stagnant water all the time. There are lizards and flies too. We do have light in the toilets, and an inverter as well, but in case there is no electricity for a long period of time (which is a very common problem in the area), we are to use candles. In such cases, we always need to have someone to accompany us to the washroom.”

“How do you dispose the napkins/cloth? Is anything available in school, polybags or any dustbin?”

Divya tells us, “No didiji, we always get our supply from home. Our parents always get it for us. We throw everything outside the school premises. Five or six of us make a group and go out and dispose it at night. Otherwise we store it in the washroom itself and throw it all together away from the school.”

We ask, “What about soap and shampoo?”

Divya, “Our parents get everything for us.”

Through the narratives, the children and the teacher build up a story of how unlike other rural schools; the children never go out in the fields to openly defecate/urinate, even though the school has dysfunctional toilets. The children must wake up in the wee hours of the morning and line up to be able to use the facilities. They must deal with pitch darkness inside the toilet compound and lug water from a hand-pump located a short walk away. The teachers find out that we have visited the washrooms on the ground floor, and we hear whispers and a look of disapproval. The children insist on clicking pictures with us, as we get ready to leave.

A child runs up to us and says, “Madam, we also need a mathematics teacher. We want to pass our exams. If we don't get a teacher soon, we will not pass”.

STATE: Uttar Pradesh

School Population					Teachers	
School	Boys	Girls	CWSN boys	CWSN girls	Male	Female
Upper Primary	119	151			2	4

There are instances that make one lose faith and those that make one believe that not all is lost, and that efforts do count. One such encounter was at the Junior High School in the Paswara village of Mahoba district in UP gave us a sneak-peek into how things could turn around if a school was in good hands which in this case implied the presence of an upright Headmaster with strong principles.

The school had a boundary wall and the compound looked clean. The kids were inside classrooms and the decibel levels emanating from those classrooms were appropriate. The school had four hand-pumps within the compound and the upper Primary children could drink from any of those. The headmaster was an amiable person, and this claim by the children seemed fairly credible. We inspected the water source closest to classes 6, 7 and 8 and it looked clean. It had proper drainage, no stagnant water, there was no garbage around it and the children had no complaints.

“We first wash our hands, and then drink water.” It was a good beginning to some very exciting things we were about to hear.

There was a common toilet for boys and girls, one for latrine and the other for urination. The children insisted that the boys respected the girls’ privacy and did not cause any problems when the girls were using the toilets. The girls reciprocated likewise. We noted that the toilet had a bucket and a mug.

Anju, one of the children who participated in the Focus Group Discussion is a tall girl from grade 8. She was confident and seemed, in command. If the discussion turned confusing for us, she would let the children finish, and then pitched in with a clearer version of the story.



“Do the toilets get dirty?”

Anju: “Kids sometimes dirty it. Sir gets it cleaned”.

“Is it cleaned every day?”

Anju: “No, but whenever it gets dirty, we tell the teacher and it is cleaned”.

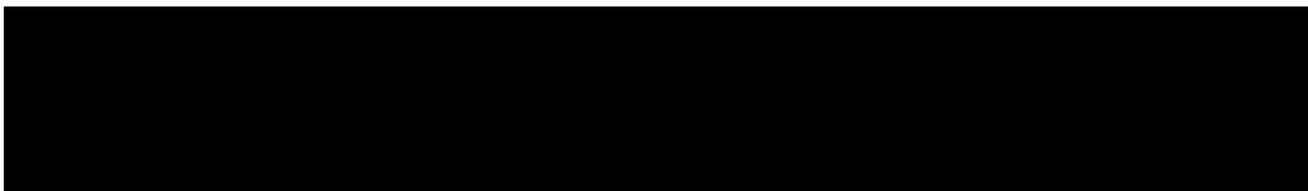
The toilet for students and teachers is common. The sweeper is on campus at the time of visit. In fact, we catch him in action. He is responsible for cleaning the school grounds and the toilet facilities.

During recess, when it gets crowded, the children go in pairs. One stands guard outside, while the other uses the facility. Once these two children are done, the other two get to use the facility. This is to avoid long lines near the toilet. The teachers have taught the children well. They are not allowed to go out in the open, and they adhere by it obediently.

“Have any of the boys ever teased you when you were using the toilet facility?”

“No, of course not. The teachers in this regard are really good. They scold the boys and the boys never do any of this.”

“Which teacher?”



“Do you come to school during your menstrual days? Do you come regularly or stay back at home or take leave?”

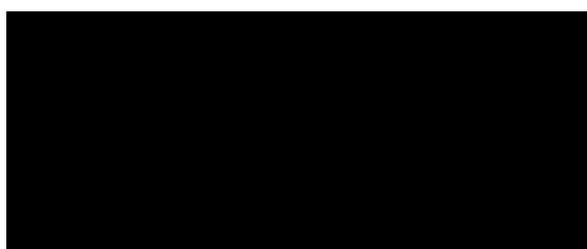
“Yes, we come every day. No, we don't stay home.”



“How do you dispose/ change/ wash the clothes at school in those days? Do you have dustbins kept inside?”

“We throw it on the other side of the boundary, in the open. Or if we need to wash it, we just do that in the washroom. Or if we need to change, we ask for our teacher-didi's help. Usually, we come prepared from home, but if we need to dispose it, we just throw it at a short distance.”

And there's more, “Has there been any programme organised to teach you about your health and sanitation? Has your teacher ever told you about precautions to be taken during your periods?”



“How many students went for that programme?” One of the girls: “About 4 to 6 girls from each grade, around 20 girl students”.

“Did you discuss it with other students after coming back?”

All students collectively, “Yes”

Anju volunteers and seeks permission to explain further all things she learnt, “We must not joke if a girl gets her periods. We should not ostracise the girl, we should instead help her. We should tell the teachers, so they can help the girl.”

We were in awe of the child’s knowledge and her level of maturity. She continued:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We must not share them. Also, if the mother has HIV AIDS the child may also be infected.”

This is a 14 year old child studying in a very backward district, in a village I had previously never heard of. The school is fairly cut off from a big city or town and yet the awareness here among children is mind-boggling.

What could we do to improve the sanitation facilities in this school?

Another girl Dolly tells us, “We are very happy with the facility. Small kids should not be allowed to defecate on the road, in the open. They must use the toilet facility.”

Seema tells us, “We should have a tap inside the toilet”.

Kiran says, “There should be a brush in the toilet”.

Mukta adds, “We need soap also. We have to ask for soap from the kitchen cook.”

And a final comment from Anju, “We should have an earthen pot with water in our school, together with a ladle to take the water out. If we use the same glass to dip inside the earthen pot, our hand would touch the water inside leading to bacterial growth. The ladle should have a long handle and we need a glass to pour the water into.”

“The school is ours. It is for all our brothers and sisters. Cleanliness is important. Just like our home, our school is ours too. We must keep it clean.”

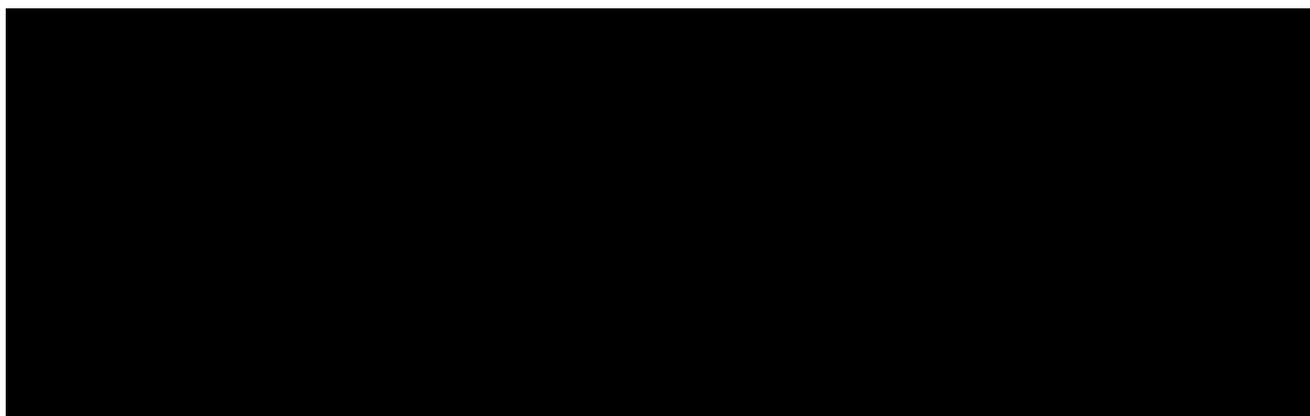
We clicked a few pictures with the children, and Anju was not coy. She put her arm on my shoulder, as if to make a point that no one intimidated her.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He was obliged to have us over and spoke as we sipped on some tea and munched on local savouries.

“Our school needs more toilets. We have 270 children and accordingly need more”. This toilet is shared between the Junior High school, the Primary school and the Kanya Vidyalaya.

He adds, “For water, we need a water tank and filter. You see, this is a hilly area and we get hard water. This creates an issue in cooking dal (pulses). Since there is only one hand-pump near the toilet, it takes time. If we had a tank with taps, many children could wash their hands, before and after their meals.”



A teacher present in the rooms adds, “Other than a sweeper, we should also get a person to clean”.

We ask him if there is anything that must be done, to ensure children come to school regularly. Also, what needs to be done to make certain the sanitation facilities do not adversely impact their attendance.

The headmaster explains, “Girls, as they get to grade 7 are married off. They stay in school till grade 8 and quit soon after.”

The

He tells us about the funding situation, “Recently, the Kanya Vidyalaya got 70,000 rupees. My school only got 10,000 rupees sometime back and we built this one toilet complex.”

The headmaster put in a request with the Pradhan as well. In spite of having been given an answer in the affirmative, nothing has been done to date.



"I try every year. This year the money went into the Kanya Vidyalaya. They make efforts to acquire funds too".

We expressed gratitude to the headmaster for his time and good work and insisted on a photograph. He consented and insisted that we take the picture inside a classroom, with his students.

STATE: Jharkhand



The [REDACTED] students enrolled between standards 6 to 12. This school had two double-storied hostel buildings; one being a fairly new construction while the other was an old building. The school had no boundary wall, and hence the teachers followed a strict punishment rule if the children disobeyed their instruction and went off campus.

The school building, where the students attended classes did not have any toilet facility. The headmistress, Anju madam, told us how that there was a pressing need to have a toilet complex at the school building which is where the children spent most of their day. As compared to the older building, the new construct did not house basic facilities such as beds, medical supplies, water filter etc. She told us that this was primarily because of a lack of funds with the school.

“The water from one of the hand-pumps is siphoned into the tank through a pipe which is then used for bathing and other cleaning purposes”, the teacher told us.

The school had two hand-pumps. Anju madam told us that water testing had rendered one of the hand pumps’ water supply as unsuitable. This water from this pump was therefore used for bathing purposes. The water from the other hand-pump had fewer impurities and was used for drinking purposes. As told to us, the school ensured that through filtration and the usage of purifying substances such as, ‘Pureit’, the water was made suitable for drinking. The teacher also informed us that the total number of filters available in the school was not enough for all the 135 students.

“The water filter is kept only in the old building and all the children staying in the new building have to come to the new building in order to get water”.



three to four more water taps.

About the overall cleanliness, the teacher informed us that there were two sweepers who were responsible for cleaning the toilets. According to

the children, the school had all necessary items for cleaning. There were mugs, buckets, soaps, brush and phenyl. For cleaning, water was taken from the hand-pump in a bucket since there was no running water facility within the building. The maintenance of toilets was difficult because the toilet for the residential and the school building was the same, complained Anju Madam.

Soaps were available both within the toilet complex and near the hand-pump area. When there was no soap, the children used ash or mud. There was no difficulty in closing the doors. Both the students and the teachers told us that it would be easier if there were hooks inside the bathing complex where the children could hang their clothes. "Currently, the children hang their clothes on the door which has some amount of gap on top". According to the children, the bathing area needed to be slightly bigger and spacious.

The headmistress told us, "The school has a program of giving out sanitary napkins to the children. Three cartons of sanitary napkins are bought each month, containing seventy packets. The school receives a grant of 60,000 INR per year from the district for the purchase of medical facilities. A certain amount of the money is used for the purchase of sanitary napkins. The school maintains two registers. One is kept with the students while the other remains with the teacher. Whenever a child needs the napkins, they register themselves with the concerned student which is then reported to the teacher by the end of the week and an account is maintained."

The school also had dustbins within the toilet complex, where children disposed their sanitary napkins. "The sweeper empties these dustbins infrequently; therefore students take up the responsibility of cleaning it once these dustbins are full", the teacher told us.

The students' list out the [REDACTED]

A child smiled and told us how she needs a mirror in the school, an almirah or rack to keep the Dettol, and harpic and odonil to keep away the smell. "We need more tanks to store water, such that there is enough running water to keep the bathroom and toilets clean".

The children also felt that they needed a bigger filter, which would cater to the needs of all the children in the school. According to them the drinking water facility for the older and the younger girls should be different.

Priya tells us with a smile, "We need a picture on the door which will convey that these toilets are meant for girls".

STATE: Bihar



Interviewer, “Sir, is one hand-pump (*chapakal*) adequate for the 100 students in your school?”

Teacher, “*Nahi kaafi toh nahi hain, par jo bhi ho, sahi stithi mein hona chahiye*” translating to, no it isn’t adequate, but whatever we have, should at least be functional.

Pravin madam had put in a request to get the school a water purifier, so that the students would not have to drink water directly from the hand pump. She told us that the water had arsenic content given the geographical location of the district.

When the socialization of a child is instituted on the debris of discrimination, how does the child begin to perceive herself? Our interaction with a set of twenty children with complete or partial visual difficulties gave us an insight into the realities of [REDACTED]



The intent of these [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] with the school authorities, children from both the categories and through our observation.

“When the Visually challenged children were admitted to this school, the general students were not too open to the idea. They had difficulties in accepting these children as one of them. In fact, they would not even take food from the utensils used by them. It was very difficult to create an ambiance of harmonic coexistence within the school”, explained the teacher.

The case study explores this proposition through the narratives of the children, the school management and documentation made by the researchers visiting the school.

When we visited the school, Pravin madam, the teacher-in-charge, understanding the intent of our study was eager to take us around the school and insisted that we speak to the residents as well.

As we [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] so that whoever needed to access it could walk over these bricks to avoid wading through the dirty water.



Priya, a visually impaired 12 year old boarder of the school, shared with us, “Madam, nobody treats us differently, we are all friends. We do have difficulties in accessing the facilities made available in the school, but we help each other out. Sometimes even the ‘general’ students help us out. Sometimes though, the general students feel indifferent and yet many a times, they are grossed out by our condition.”

The fact that they were unable to stay as clean as the general students, and unable to clean the toilets after use, were some of the reasons why the general students resented the visually impaired (VI) students.

“Sometimes due to our physical appearances, like my eyes being closed makes them spiteful of me. They ask me to keep wearing my glasses so that they do not have to see my eyes”, laments Pinky.

In statements such as this, one clearly sees a tendency to identify oneself more through differences than similarities. In our interaction with both the CWSN and the non-CWSN, the language of the former contains a certain sense of submission to the idea of the 'normal', associated with the 'condition' of being able to see. The latter on the other hand has a sense of supremacy to be able to grapple with the mundane, without help or assistance.

This school has no infrastructure to assist VI students with their condition. By a mere decision to integrate VI students in the mainstream education system, little or no attention is paid to their needs.



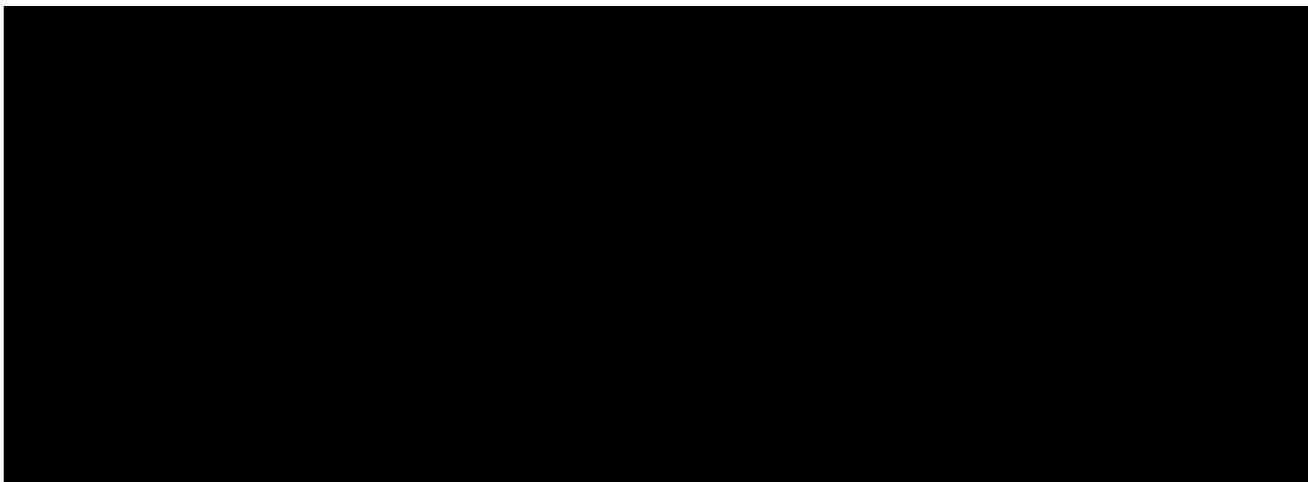
In exploring these modalities with respect to the limits of the infrastructure, we can begin with the drinking water facilities made available in the school. As discussed, the school has one hand-pump in the central courtyard, which was at least two feet below the school corridor. The teachers complained that the drainage system at the hand-pump area had been clogged for weeks. The students had to tip toe to the water source by stepping onto bricks laid out in the pool of stagnant water.

The situation was bad enough for the general students and yet [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The children told us that given the inconvenience, they often avoided drinking water altogether. While conducting an FGD with the general students, the children often giggled and laughed when they recounted instances of CWSN falling down and wetting themselves near the hand pump. One child mentioned instances of girls having hurt themselves.

Choti, a 7 year old talked about how she could not press the handle of the *chapakal* nor reach the wash basin.

“Pooja didi, another visually challenged child helps all of us who cannot reach the tap”.



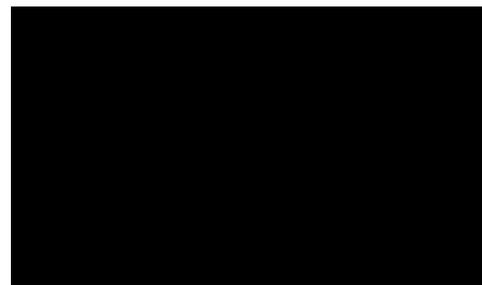
The school had two toilet and bathroom complexes, one on each floor. Each toilet complex had 4 sets of toilet compartments and 4 sets of bathing chambers.



The school authorities complained that owing to the most recent order they had received from the district headquarters, the children had to clean their own toilets, a task earlier done by a sweeper. Pravin madam let us know that though the sweeper was irregular, the task of cleaning was still taken care off.

On our way back, Reema, a 6th standard student walked up to us and said “*Didi*, we do not want to clean the toilets”.

According to the school management that had been trying to counsel the children, “The children will definitely do it if they need to. But the problem lies in us having a set of students who will be unable to do it and a set of children who will need to do it for themselves as well as for the others. The visually challenged children, owing to their difficulties, are unable to use the toilets properly. The general students ask us how they will manage the sanitation facility for all students.”



Unlike most other schools, this school did have a functional running water facility within the toilet complex.

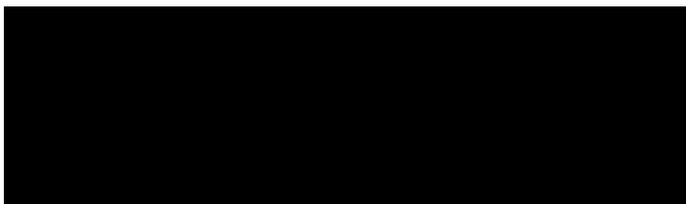
As for the bathrooms, the children say that they need a hook or a rope inside the compartment to hang their clothes.

“Most of the time, we need to have someone to wait outside in order to hold our clothes. When we do not have someone, the clothes inevitably fall on the ground and gets wet. We also need enough buckets and mugs. Currently we only have two buckets which are not enough for the entire school”.



When we visited the bathroom area, it was relatively clean. The floor was mopped; there were no noticeable stains on the pot and the doors were functional. Madam told us that she had asked the visually challenged children not to lock the doors from inside lest the child fall and get trapped.

When asked about the problems pertaining to their menstrual days, the children told us that they had difficulties in disposing sanitary napkins since there were no dustbins made available to them. Moreover, they had to get the sanitary napkins from home since it was not available in school.



She further added, “Since most children here are in their teens the issues pertaining to menstruation are quite prevalent. We have to manage somehow. There are some programs that the NGOs have

undertaken to conduct health and hygiene programs in the schools. But that is for the general candidates. We have some BBC radio programs which the visually impaired students are made to listen in order to create awareness on hygiene”.



In

to bringing about a behavioural change among the students.

The school management and the students collectively opined that the basic requirement currently was that of a sweeper, everything else was manageable. With the new declaration of withdrawing specific grants for availing this facility, residential schools such as this are unsure of what to do.

WHAT THE SCHOOLS' NEED

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

This chapter highlights some of the needs and demands as articulated by the students and the school management with respect to the Water and Sanitation infrastructure. Also, included are certain recommendations to improve the WASH infrastructure as inferred from a discussion with the children.

1. Absence of a boundary wall:

- A majority of schools visited by the team had at least one toilet complex constructed within the school premises or outside the school plot. In most cases though, the schools did not have a boundary wall. The absence of a wall or the toilet being constructed outside the boundary wall makes it vulnerable to trespassers. As a result, the toilets complexes are often damaged and rendered dysfunctional beyond repair.
- In most schools across the three states, the toilets have to be kept locked, post school hours. This measure sometimes has an adverse effect as the trespassers break the locks to get in and damage the latching facility. The schools management complain that they do not have adequate funds to do necessary follow-ups with respect to the maintenance.
- In most cases the village community uses the school's drinking water source for their domestic need. Children and teachers explain that villagers often wash their cattle, utensils or line up to fill water in buckets and pots. Any kind of discussion to prevent the same often results in a quarrel. On the other hand, there are cases wherein the school does not have a water facility and as a result, the students make use of the communal source. The problems in this context are twofold:
 - The area around the water source becomes unclean, platforms are damaged, and there is water stagnation due to constant use.
 - The child has to wait in line with the community dwellers during the school hours/lunch break to use the facility or end up not using it.

All schools must have their drinking water facility.

The construction of a school boundary wall with an appropriate height could be a possible solution. The idea of a barrier is the first sign of declaration that access to other side is prohibited or restricted. This signification could be used to communicate to the community that the locked premises are not open to access for outsiders. It should be noted that the water source and the toilets within the school premises must be gated.

2. Lack of privacy

- The toilet complexes as seen in most school are lockable from outside. The area meant for urination, have a 2 ft. wall acting as a separator and no separate doors.
- The girls' and the boys' toilet are within the same complex and are not separated by distance but by a single wall. On many occasions the wall separating the two does not have enough height.
- In some cases the toilet compartments do not have a roof.
- Girls feel shy in walking up to the water source to collect water for self-cleaning and washing hands after using the facility. This problem is aggravated during the menstrual days.
- During the lunch hour, the water source, which serves purposes for both drinking and hand-washing remains crowded.
- In schools with bad or non-existent toilet facilities, girls prefer to go outside into the field to relieve themselves, which according to them is 'not unsafe'.
When the child goes into the field she is able to create her privacy.

Considerable distance between the two complexes will increase the scope of ensuring privacy. All toilets must be covered and toilet compartments must be walled with lockable doors.

Ideally, there must be a water source inside the toilet compartment for self-cleaning. The water source for hand washing must be located outside and not too far from the toilet complex.

3. No person delegated for cleaning toilet facilities

- Sweepers are called in when the headmaster/teacher feels that the toilets must be cleaned. They are not on regular pay roll. May times, the community cleaners are paid small amounts to clean the school toilets. Sweepers hired occasionally are also responsible for cleaning toilets meant for teachers.
- The cleaning activities are done by the caretaker/cook, also known as the *daa'i*.
- There are instances where students clean school toilets. In certain residential schools, students are forced to clean teachers' toilets as well. In general, students tell us that they dislike doing so.
- Perceptions about certain communities such as *doms* and *adivasis* being responsible for the maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene have an underlying tone of discrimination.
- Teachers voice their need for sweepers/person to be delegated for maintenance of the school toilet facilities. However, they claim their hands are tied owing to lack of funds.

All schools, especially residential schools need full-time/part-time sweepers (depending on number of students in school) designated for cleaning the toilet and drinking water/hand washing facilities. Separate funds must be allocated for this expense. Visits must be monitored to ensure regular cleaning of the facilities.

4. Lack of provisions for cleaning

- Most schools do not have provisions for natural cleansing materials such as ash, colloquially known as *rakh* while soaps are a distant reality. Children usually wash their hands using mud (*mitti*), if at all.
- A headmaster in Jharkhand recommended that it is more reasonable for teachers or headmasters in school to be proactive in providing ash. Given the paucity of funds; receiving any aide in schools for providing soap is unrealistic.
- Most schools do not have a running water facility within the toilet complex.
- There are no buckets or mugs, inside the toilet complex. In a few cases, a bucket or bottle is made available near the hand pump i.e. the available water source.
- Brush, disinfectants such as Harpic or phenyl are unavailable.

At all points, adequate amount of ash, soap, buckets, mugs, brush and disinfectants should be made available at the school facility. Soaps and ash should be provided near the hand washing area and near the toilet complex.

5. Drinking water unfit for consumption

- Some schools situated in hilly topographies, get muddy/sandy water or water with other solid impurities. Certain areas have arsenic content in ground water, rendering it unsuitable for drinking
- In a majority of the cases, the same impure water is used for cooking the mid-day meals.
- Sometimes water purifiers and filters were found in the headmasters' chambers. These however, were either not in use or if in use, they were inaccessible to the students.

Water testing and water purification mechanisms are a necessity. It was seen that certain organisations as a part of their corporate social responsibility venture provided water filters to certain schools across the state of Bihar. Such practices must be encouraged and organisations could be asked to undertake similar ventures.

In case the schools set up water filters, it should be ensured that the position of the filter is accessible to students of all groups and heights. The school management needs to ensure that the filters are being cleaned regularly.

If possible, water purification devices must be connected directly to the hand pumps, which are the primary source of drinking water across the sampled schools.

6. Waste disposal problems

- **Waste disposal problems inside the toilets:** This is due to the lack of waste disposal facilities, such as buckets or covered dustbins within the toilet complex. In most schools, which have partially functional toilets, there are instances of blockage of the toilet drainage system due to the

accumulation of garbage and/or faeces. Over a period of time, this blockage of the toilet pots renders the toilet dysfunctional and unusable.

- **Waste disposal problems in the water source area:** Waste disposal in and around the water source area can be due to:
 - Waste disposal problems during the mid-day meals: Most schools had a common washing and drinking water source. Children and the kitchen staff while cleaning the utensils empty the waste at the water source drainage. This leads to the choking of drain and water stagnation clubbed with algal growths which makes the area slippery.
 - In many instances, the community uses the school water source for domestic purposes. Children complain that villagers wash their utensils, cattle and throw garbage in the area.

The children opine that the toilet must have covered dustbins to dispose waste and to prevent garbage stench. The dustbins should be emptied regularly.

The schools need to have separate vats for the disposal of food wastes from the mid-day meals.

Proper ventilation within the latrine complex should be ensured in order to avoid stench.

School toilets and water source must be regularly cleaned to avoid blockage and maintain the facility.

7. Inadequate funds for the upkeep of WASH infrastructure

- The teachers inform us that the funds for overall school maintenance and the maintenance of WASH infrastructure are not separate. The total fund received for maintenance is used up in the maintenance of the school building or painting, purchase of furniture etc. Given inflation, these funds are inadequate and hence expenses on WASH infrastructure are not a priority for the schools management who must make do with available funds.
- According to the school management, funds provided are not enough to hire people for cleaning activities or to purchase cleaning material.

Funds for the construction and maintenance of WASH facilities should be separately provided and not clubbed with overall maintenance. There should be a monitoring mechanism in place to ensure that the funds are being appropriately utilized.

8. Lack of hygiene education

As per the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA) program, all schools need to have a teacher appointed for imparting hygiene education. In the course of field work, a very miniscule number of schools had this facility.

There should be strict implementation of the aforementioned guideline across all schools. Adolescent girls must be instructed on healthy lifestyle practises.

CAVEAT CASES:

9. Adolescent girls

- All schools need to have provisions for sanitary napkins.
- The toilet complex should have running water facility such that the child does not need to carry water from the water source, which in most cases is located outside or at a considerable distance from the toilet complex. In coeducational schools, the girl child finds it embarrassing to fetch water and carry it to the toilets.
- In case there is a need to keep the toilets locked, it should be made sure that the keys to the toilets are with a female teacher. In schools where the keys are usually kept with the headmaster or a male teacher, children express hesitation in asking for the key.
- There should be covered dustbins inside the toilet complex, to dispose off sanitary napkins

10. Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

- Nearly 100% of the schools had no *separate* toilet or drinking water provision for CWSN.
- Toilets meant for usage by general students had no separate provisions for CWSN children. There were no handrails or ramps near the toilet.
- The toilets were located a little/a step above the ground level and were in most cases not spacious.
- The drinking water area had no special provision either. The hand pumps were located at a distance from the classrooms and there was no assistance. Additionally, most schools had stagnant water and algae growth in the area making it slippery and dangerous for all students.

11. Residential schools

- Most residential schools had inadequate number of facilities, given the school strength.
- The students were responsible for cleaning all toilets and bathrooms. The teachers have tendencies to monopolize a set of toilets and get it cleaned by students.
 - In Bihar, the district administration recently declared that students would do the cleaning of toilets henceforth and no separate funds would be provided for the appointment of a sweeper.
- Most schools lacked water heating facilities and students complained about lining up at 5 am even on cold winter days to be ready in time for schools.
- Students complained about the lack of or inadequacy of soaps, shampoos, toilets provisions for cleaning.
- All adolescent girls maintained a stock of sanitary napkins they got from home. Regular meetups with guardians enabled them to replenish their stock. For students whose parents/guardians lived far off or seldom met, this was a big problem.
- The drinking water sources in the residential school are not enough for all students. These are sometimes located far away from the school building.

- In some residential schools, while the hostel building has toilets, the school building compound does not have any and the students must return to the hostel in the middle of a school day to relieve themselves. This sometimes results in students heading to the fields, if the hostel is located far.

There should be provision to provide hot water in hilly schools, especially during the winter season.

The bathing areas need hooks for the children to hang clothes. Currently, no residential schools have such provisions.

The child should be provided soaps and shampoos, which they currently get from home when their parents or guardians come to visit.

It is important to provide the children with sanitary napkins in the residential schools.

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ANNEXURE

SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

1. Outline India was provided with a list of districts and blocks to be covered in each of the target states by the Water Aid Team.
2. Based on the above location criteria, the sample data was obtained from the DIAS portal. The District Information System for Education or DIAS is a government enterprise that has been developed to strengthen the educational programme in India through an efficient monitoring system.
(<http://schoolreportcards.in/SRC-New/AdvanceSearch/AdvanceSearch.aspx>)
3. The following table summarizes the number of districts and block that will be covered:

States	Total Number of Districts	Total Number of Blocks
Uttar Pradesh	5	14
Bihar	5	8
Jharkhand	4	6
Total	14	28

4. The data list was further divided into schools with toilet and schools without toilets based on availability of data on the DIAS portal.

States	Total Number of Schools with Toilets	Total Number of Schools without Toilets
Uttar Pradesh	184	4
Bihar	110	7
Jharkhand	180	15
Total	474	26

5. The data was filtered out in the following order of priority to hit the target goal of 500:
 - a. Primary with Upper Primary and Secondary/Higher Secondary
 - b. Primary with Upper Primary
 - c. Upper Primary

This was done to ensure maximum participation during the focus group discussion from adolescent girls and CWSN students of an appropriate age group in the Primary with Upper Primary and Secondary/Higher Secondary.

However, the overall sample covers students across the age group of 6-14.

6. The permutations were built based on the categorization followed on the DIAS portal. The main heads were:
- Locate school
 - Basic search
 - Facilities

a. Locate School:

- Academic year: 2012-13 was chosen to get the most recent data available
- State, District and Block were filled out according to the list provided by WA.
- Other fields such as cluster and the block were left blank

The table provided below lists out the states, their corresponding districts and blocks where the study is to be done:

STATE	NO. OF DISTRICTS	TOTAL NO. OF BLOCKS	NAMES OF DISTRICTS	NO. OF BLOCKS IN EACH DISTRICT	NAMES OF BLOCKS
UTTAR PRADESH	5	14	BANDA	2	Naraini
					Bisanda
			CHITTRAKOOT	2	Chittrakoot
					Mau
			BALLIA	4	Bairia
					Belahari
					Murli Chhapra
					Revti
			MAHOBA	4	Kabrai
					Charkhari
					Panwari
					Jaitpur
			LUCKNOW	1	Chinhut

BIHAR	5	8	NALANDA	2	Giriyak Bihar Sharif
			PATNA	1	Maner
			SAHARSA	2	Mahishi
					Kahara
			GAYA	1	Fatehpur
			MADHUBANI	2	Andhrathari
					Jhanjharpur
JHARKHAND	4	6	PAKUR	1	Pakuria
			DEOGARH	2	Maohanpur
					Devipur
			DUMKA	2	Jarmundi
					Gopikandar
GODDA	1	Boraijor			

b. Basic search

- Management: 'All Government Managements' was chosen to help narrow the sample to only SSA schools
- Category: Only three categories were chosen:
 - Primary with Upper Primary and Secondary/Higher Secondary
 - Primary with Upper Primary
 - Upper Primary
- Area: **Rural** was chosen throughout, given the objective of the study
- Type: Two categories were chosen in the following order of priority
 - Co-educational
 - Girls
- The other fields were left blank

c. Facilities

- Common Toilet: Two categories were chosen in the following order of priority
 - Yes
 - Select Toilet
- Boys Toilet: Two categories were chosen in the following order of priority
 - Yes
 - Select Toilet
- Girls Toilet: Two categories were chosen in the following order of priority
 - Yes
 - Select Toilet
- The other fields were left blank

NOTE: The other two subheads of 'General Information' and 'Enrolment, Teachers and Indicators' were left as such.

7. Based on the above criteria, 9 permutations were designed as (Table below):
- Permutation 1 enlisted under the highest priority and was the smallest subset of the sample.
 - Every time school/schools was/were obtained in any particular block, the report card/cards was/were downloaded. This was continued for each block in the district and for all districts. This was the end of round 1 of iterations
 - In case the total target was not complete for any state then a round 2 was of iterations was conducted. To begin round 2, the village with the lowest permutation count in the list was chosen (to get the oldest set of students possible). After each permutation revision, the list of villages was viewed in entirety to decide which permutation would be used next. If in round 2 the target set of schools was not achieved, a 3rd round was conducted and so on.
 - This was done until the said target for the state was achieved.

Given below is the permutation table for better understanding:

Table 1*

	Permutation 1	Permutation 2	Permutation 3	Permutation 4	Permutation 5	Permutation 6	Permutation 7	Permutation 8	Permutation 9
Locate School									
Academic Year	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13
State	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
District	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A
Block	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A
Basic Search									
Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management
Category	Primary with U P and Hr/sec	U Primary	U Primary	U Primary					
Area	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Type	Co ed	Co ed	Girls	Co ed	Co ed	Girls	Co ed	Co ed	Girls
Facilities									
Common Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet
Boys Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet
Girls Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet
Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water						
	Permutation 1	Permutation 2	Permutation 3	Permutation 4	Permutation 5	Permutation 6	Permutation 7	Permutation 8	Permutation 9
Locate School									

Academic Yr.	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13
State	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
District	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A
Block	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A
Basic Search									
Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management	All Govt Management
Category	Pri with U P and Hr/sec	Pri with U P and Hr/sec	Pri with U P and Hr/sec	Pri w U Primary	Pri w U Primary	Pri w U Primary	U Primary	U Primary	U Primary
Area	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Type	Co ed	Co ed	Girls	Co ed	Co ed	Girls	Co ed	Co ed	Girls
Facilities									
Common Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet
Boys Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet
Girls Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet	Yes	Select Toilet	Select Toilet
Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water

*** KEY**

A- stands for the chosen states.

D1A- stands for the district 1 in State A

B1D1A- Block 1 in district D1 in State A

Primary with U P and HR/ Sec- Primary with Upper Primary and Higher secondary school.

Primary with U Primary- Primary with Upper Primary School.

U Primary- Upper Primary School.

Co-Ed- Coeducational School

- A system of permutation testing was also made for schools with no toilets following the same methodology as described above, except all points the type of wash facility available in schools was maintained as **NO**

Given below is the Permutation table for schools with no wash facility:

Table 2*

	Permutation 1	Permutation 2	Permutation 3	Permutation 4	Permutation 5	Permutation 6
Locate School						

Academic Year	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13	2012-13
State	A	A	A	A	A	A
District	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A	D1A
Block	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A	B1D1A
Basic Search						
Management	All Govt Managemen nt	All Govt Managemen nt	All Govt Managemen nt	All Govt Managemen nt	All Govt Managemen nt	All Govt Managemen nt
Category	Primary with U P and Hr/sec	Primary with U P and Hr/sec	Primary w U Primary	Primary w U Primary	U Primary	U Primary
Area	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Type	Co ed	Girls	Co ed	Girls	Co ed	Girls
Facilities						
Common Toilet	No	No	No	No	No	No
Boys Toilet	No	No	No	No	No	No
Girls Toilet	No	No	No	No	No	No
Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water	Select Drinking Water

***KEY**

A- stands for the chosen states.

D1A- stands for the district 1 in State A

B1D1A- Block 1 in district D1 in State A

Primary with U P and HR/ Sec- Primary with Upper Primary and Higher secondary school.

Primary with U Primary- Primary with Upper Primary School.

U Primary- Upper Primary School.

Co ed- Coeducational School

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

CWSN: Children with special needs

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

KGBV: Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

UMS: Upper Middle School

UPS: Upper primary School

UP: Uttar Pradesh

NBA: Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan

TRANSLATIONS

Abaya: A cloak or a loose over-garment worn by Muslim women.

Adhikari: Govt. of Official Invigilators

Aloo: Potato

Anganwadi: 'Courtyard Shelter' / Crèche. They were started by the Indian government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. A typical Anganwadi centre also provides basic health care in Indian villages.

Baalak: Boys

Chaapakal: Hand pump

Daa'i: Maid/cook

Daal: Pulses

Darwaza: Door

Didiji: Literally means older sister. The term has been used by the children as an expression for adulation or respect

Ghumane Wala: A tap with a rotating handle

Haldi: Turmeric

Jee: Yes

Jhol-Bhaat: Rice and stew

Ji Nahi: No

Kanya/Baalika: Girls

Kichad: Mud/Muck

Madarsa: School

Nal/tooti: Tap

Paani: Water

Pareshan: Harass/disturb/irritate

Panchayat: Village level administration

Pisaab: Urinate

Sauchalaya: Toilet

Sharm/laaj: Embarrassment/shame

Sitkaani: Latch

Vidyalaya: School

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