



Status of Sanitation Facilities in Elementary School and its Impact on Girl Child - A Case Study of Jorhat District of Assam

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Abstract:

Absence of sanitation facilities in Elementary School has many impacts upon students, especially upon girls. Despite of numerous schemes and policies related to providing sanitation facilities in Elementary Schools, many schools lacks this facility. There exist huge disparities in terms of availability of Sanitation infrastructure in the Elementary Schools worldwide. Jorhat district of Assam, which is the locale of this study, is also not different in this regard. Therefore, this study is an attempt to show the availability of sanitation facilities in elementary schools of Jorhat district along with its impact upon girl child.

Keywords: Sanitation Facilities, Elementary Schools, Girl.

1. Introduction:

We all are familiar with the fact that food, clothe and shelter are the three basic needs that are required by a man to survive in this world. But, it has not been remained limited to food, clotheand shelter. Sanitation, Health and Education etc have been increased and were now becoming major requirements for man to survive in this present world.

Elementary Education which is the First Level of Education includes the smallest and most sensitive generations of a Nation. The availability of infrastructure in the schools have serious impact on them may it be in terms of academic outcomes or their presence in the schools. And among all other infrastructural facilities – Availability of sanitation facilities also plays a very significant role in students enrollments and drop outs.

Many studies have revealed that due to absence of sanitation facilities, there were many drop outs, especially in Girls case. As per a report gets published in “*The Times of India*” published in 12 January 2017, Former director of Defense Research Laboratory (DRDO) stated once that due to shortage of toilet facility, 23 percent of adolescent girls drop out from schools. He later shared many of similar shocking data related to the lack of toilet facilities in the country.

Similarly, *Anita Barua* published an article in “*The Better India*” on 04 May 2022, stating that 1 out of 5 girls drop out of school due to poor sanitation facilities in the school. She also provided some other reasons like women’s monthly cycle of menstruation is shrouded in shame and discrimination which enable them to be treated as untouchables.

Moreover, as per *Punekar News*, report published in 12 November, 2022, in a health survey conducted in rural parts of Maharashtra, school going girls aged between 11-19 years (the start of menstrual cycle) drop schools due to poor sanitation facilities in the schools.

Therefore, keeping above facts in mind, this paper is an attempt to trace out the status of sanitation facilities in the elementary schools of Jorhat district of Assam along with the major impacts on girl child due to its absence.

2. Methods

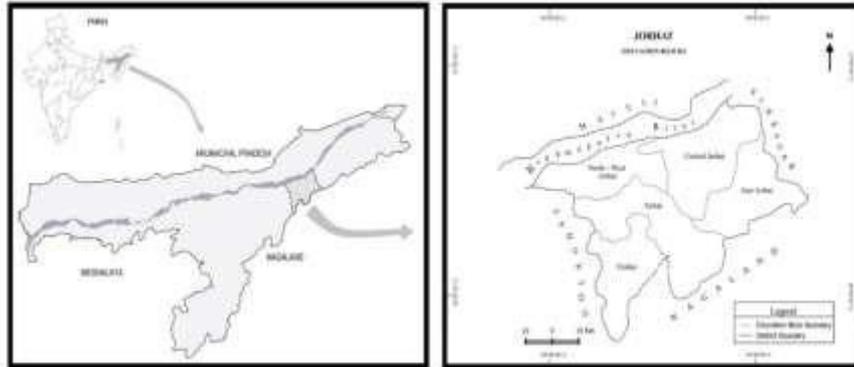
Research design: This research work is totally based on the data collected personally. Thus, the Research Method used in this study is the Descriptive Research method which is a Fact Finding Research Method with adequate interpretation.

Sampling: Stratified Random Sampling Technique is used in this study to draw out the samples. As samples, 30 Elementary Schools from all the Education Blocks has been randomly selected to carry out this research work.

Data: Both Primary data and Secondary data is used in this study. Data related to the present status of sanitation facilities in the Elementary Schools among the Education Blocks are collected personally from the sample schools. And to know about the development status of sanitation facilities in the Elementary Schools, Secondary data from UDISE-Reports were used.

3. Study area

Jorhat district of Assam has been selected as the study area for this research work. There are five Education Blocks in the district. The following map shows the study area.



Map 1 - Study Area Map

4. Results and findings

The outcomes of this Research Work are as below:

4.1 Present Status:

From the following graph, it is clear that Jorhat education block with 96.66 percent has the highest percentage of Elementary Schools with sanitation facilities. Then, Titabar block has 90 percent Elementary Schools with sanitation facilities. Similarly, North West block has 86.66 percent, East Jorhat Block has 83.33 percent and Central Jorhat has 80 percent elementary schools with sanitation facilities.

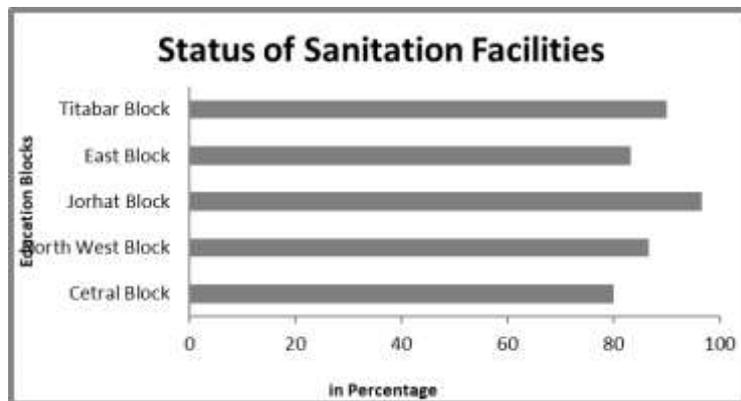


Diagram 1 – Bar Diagram showing status of sanitation facilities

4.2 Trend:

While talking about the development status of sanitation facilities, it is of foremost important to mention about S.S.A- SarvaSiksha Abhiyan, who played a significant role since its arrival in the state. Though the changes were not enough, but whatever changes have been taken that is due to the implementation of S.S.A. S.S.A was implemented in the year 2002 in Assam and therefore changes were observed from 2002.

From the following graph, it is easily observable that North West Jorhat block has only 10 percent Elementary Schools with sanitation facilities before 2002. It increased to 13.33 percent in 2002 and to 76.66 percent in 2010 and 83.33 in 2018. After that East Jorhat Block has 13.33 percent Elementary Schools with sanitation facilities which has increased to 16.66 percent in 2002, 73.33 percent in 2010 and to 86.66 percent in 2018. After that Jorhat

Block has 26.66 percent Elementary Schools with sanitation facilities before 2002 which has increased to 30 percent in 2002, 76.66 percent in 2010 and 96.66 percent in 2018. Then Titabar Block has 13.33 percent Elementary Schools with sanitation facilities before 2002 which has increased to 23.33 percent in 2002, 73.33 percent in 2010 and 90 percent in 2018. Central Jorhat Block has 13.33 percent Elementary Schools with sanitation facilities which has increased to 16.66 percent in 2002, 76.66 percent in 2010 and to 80 percent in 2018.

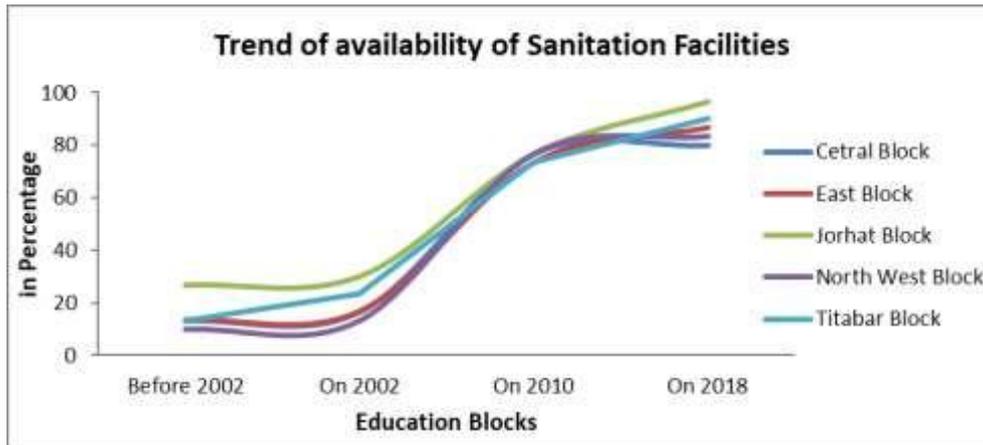
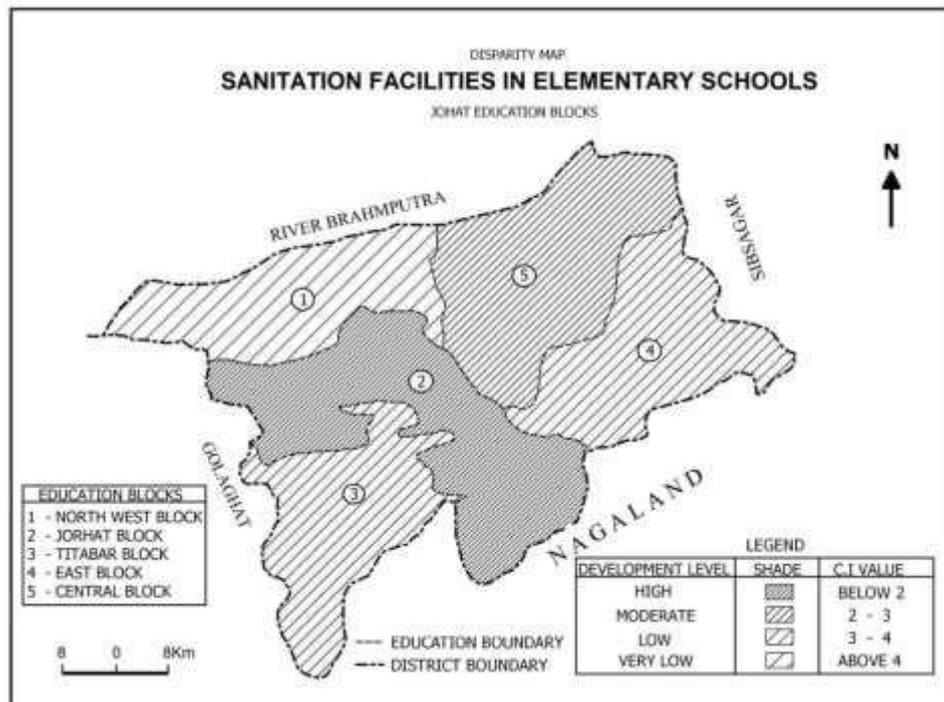


Diagram 2 – Line Graph showing availability trend of sanitation facilities

4.3 Disparity among Education Blocks:

In terms of availability of sanitation facilities in the Elementary Schools, there exists huge inequalities among the Education Blocks of Jorhat district of Assam.



Map 2: Map showing Intra – District Disparities in terms of availability of Sanitation Facilities

From the above map, it is clearly visible that there exist disparities among the education blocks of Jorhat district. However, there is no Block in the district with Cent percent schools with sanitation facilities but in comparison to all, Jorhat block has the highest level of development in terms of sanitation facilities in the elementary schools. Then the Central Block has moderate development in term of sanitation facilities. Then both Titabar and East Block have low development in terms of sanitation facilities in the elementary schools. And finally development was very low in North West Block.

4.4 Impact:

Firstly, it is found most of the Elementary Schools have sanitation facilities but were in very poor condition, due to lack of cleaning and maintenance the waste's were spread all over with smell in such a way that no one can enter there. This led the boys to toilet outside in wall corners, tree side or open fields. And in case of girls, they use to wait for school ending.

Secondly, poor sanitation conditions and unhygienic toilets leads students fall ill and many of them suffering from problems like UTI (Urinary Tract Infections) and diarrhea.

Similarly, a girl who suffers from monthly cycle of menstruation faces many difficulties to keep them clean during the school hours due to lack of sanitation facilities. This sometimes leads the girls to temporarily or permanently stay away of the school.

Moreover, girls have to share common toilets with boys. The threat they suffer as a result of this lack of privacy lead many to miss school or leave the school.

4.5 Causes:

There are numerous factors responsible for unavailability or poor sanitation facilities in the Elementary Schools as well as inequalities among the Education Blocks. Some of them are as below:

Inaccessibility: Many Elementary schools are in very remote areas where the transportation facilities are not available. In those areas Elementary schools were deprived of many infrastructural facilities.

Lack of interest: it is often seen that elementary schools were deprived of getting not only sanitation facilities but also other infrastructures. On the other hand, when we look into a higher education institute there we see all the infrastructures available. Therefore it can be said that Elementary Level Education has been neglected up to some extent in comparison to other levels of education by the concerned authorities.

4.6 Suggestion:

Firstly, schools with common toilets should avail separate toilets for both boys and girls. Which in turn will allow the girls to maintain their privacy and do the needful during menstruation to keep themselves clean. Secondly, regular cleaning and maintenance should be done so that each student can feel safe and free to use it. And this will help them to keep themselves away from any kind of disease. Thirdly, schools with sanitation facilities should avail safe water for wash purposes and keep the toilets and urinal seats clean.

5. Conclusion:

To conclude, it can be said that absence of sanitation facilities in the Elementary Schools has many serious impact on Students pursuing it. The impact may be on Student's Physical Health, Academic outcomes or their attendance rates. Moreover, absence of sanitation facilities in Elementary Schools has many impacts upon the female teachers also. It should be kept in mind that Elementary Schools are the place where a student spends lots of time and they are the smallest or youngest generations of Nation. They need lots of care and what they see in these years of Elementary Education will define their future and they will see the whole world from starting from there only. Therefore, there is a need of strong role of Government to overcome the problem of sanitation facilities in the Elementary Schools.

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