

Centre asks States to create hand washing facilities and train teachers to impart hygiene education to students in all the schools

Ensure proper functioning condition of all toilets in the schools: Centre to States

Arrangements for management of bio-degradable waste and grey water in schools in villages to be ensured

State/UTs asked to fast track the provision of stand-alone piped water supply solutions and simple, sustainable solar solutions

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### **Key Highlights**

- *Improved sanitation facilities, provision of safe drinking water and maintaining overall cleanliness in the Government schools are priority areas of the Government*
- *A chapter on Swachhta included in supplementary material at primary level to inculcate good hygiene practices*

Centre has asked the States and UTs to create hand washing facilities with the provision of soap, and train teachers to impart hygiene education to students in all the schools across the country. States/UTs have been asked to fast track the provision of stand-alone piped water supply solutions and simple, sustainable solar solutions

In a joint advisory issued by the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education; Ministry of Jal Shakti; NITI Aayog; Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, it is mentioned that the rejuvenation of basic infrastructure including improved sanitation facilities and provision of safe drinking water and maintaining the over all cleanliness in the Government schools has long been a priority of the Government. Some of the programmes being implemented in mission-mode like Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) are going a long way in improving the living standards of the people. The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) has transformed rural India by manifesting into a Jan

Andolan for sanitation. Under Phase -II of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), the focus is on Open Defecation Free (ODF) sustainability and solid and liquid waste management. Following the saturation approach, the objective, is to ensure that no one is left behind from access to improved including the Schools.

It is further mentioned that under ODF Plus, it is also to be ensured that all schools in villages have arrangements for management of bio-degradable waste and grey water. It is important to ensure that all the toilets in the schools are in proper functioning condition. However, some of them may require retrofitting from single pit to twin pits. This may be done as part of the on-going campaign of retrofitting from single pit to twin pits.

The Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) Report 2021-22 suggests some gaps in toilets and hand washing facilities. Centre has asked states that all these gaps need to be filled by following the saturation approach. Further, hand washing facilities with the provision of soap may be created in all the schools. It is also essential that hygiene education is imparted to the 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 hygiene behaviour. A chapter on Swachhta has been included in supplementary material at primary level developed by NCERT to inculcate good hygiene practices in the schools.

The advisory also mentioned that under Jal Jeevan Mission, making provision of safe tap water supply in schools, anganwadi centres, Ashram Shalas is a top priority of the Government for ensuring good health and wellbeing of our children. This critical intervention was launched in a campaign mode on 2nd October, 2020, aimed at bringing focus on the public health dimension of young children by assured supply of safe drinking water, especially in time of pandemic. So far, as per UDISE+ 2021-22 data, out of around 10.22 lakh Government schools, functional drinking water facility has been provided in 9.83 lakh [96% approx.] government schools.

The advisory mentioned that flexibility has been given to the State/UTs to provide stand-alone piped water supply solutions instead of waiting for the completion of the village water supply infrastructure for the Schools and simple sustainable solar solutions may also be provided.

Centre asked States to fast-track these projects in view of the importance of safe water for the overall health and well-being of our children.

Any requirement of funds for repair or construction of toilets, hand washing facilities or drinking water may be met from funds being released under 15<sup>th</sup> Finance commission, State Finance Commission, MGNREGS, District Mineral funds and any other sources, following the extant guidelines of these schemes/sources.

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