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Insights of School Water Consumption and Sanitation and Hygiene Practices among School Children in Dehiovita, Kegalle District, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Developing access to safe drinking water, sanitation facilities and hygiene practices can reduce water borne diseases. The present study was carried out in the Dehiovita Zonal Educational zone under the Kegalle District from December 2018 to March 2019 to monitor existing facilities in schools, behavior among students, and for the sustainable development in water, sanitation, and hygiene at the schools. A semi-structured questionnaire was conducted covering students (n=500) from grade 7-13 in 15 schools through a random sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software to compare the responses using graphical presentation. In terms of water consumption behavior, about 73% of respondents use water bottles. Of these, 73%, 43% accounted for using unsafe plastic bottles and 28% accounted for aluminum bottles. Most of the respondents, 50% mentioned that they use water bottles twice daily. In relation to the water purification method used, 45% of students use chlorinated water, whereas 36% do not have purified water. Only 36% of respondents do have a water supply. Regarding the issues of water supply, 62% of respondents stated that they have broken taps, and 54% responded on less treated water. Most respondents, 78% mentioned, that they are unsatisfied with the existing water. With regards to the sanitation behavior among students, 48% of students use the latrine twice while 32% of respondents use the latrine once a day. Most of the respondents, 88% mentioned that they do not use soap after toilet use. 78% of respondents mentioned that the existing sanitation facilities are unsatisfied. Regarding the issues associated with sanitation facilities in schools, 92% of respondents showed the unavailability of soap and 73% of respondents stated that they have old latrines, while 67% stated that there is no cleaning equipment. Given the consideration on menstrual hygiene management (MHM), the usage of sanitation facilities by female students, 28% of respondents use once daily and 26% do not use the sanitation facility. Regarding the issues associated with MHM, 91% of respondents showed that no napkins discarding facility, and 84% mentioned lack of a place to wash, while 72% of students stated the lack of water. In conclusion, it reveals that there exists a higher demand on awareness of water consumption, sanitation and hygiene practices at schools and awareness on disease spreading as there exists poor quality standards of water consumption and sanitation. Thus, it needs careful monitoring of management steps to uplift water consumption, hygiene, and sanitation. The study suggests strengthening school water, sanitation, and hygiene clubs at schools and focus on government funding for utility development.

Keywords: Water consumption, School sanitation, Hygiene practices, Dehiovita, Menstrual hygiene management