

# EQUITY IN SCHOOL WATER AND SANITATION

Overcoming Exclusion and Discrimination  
in South Asia



A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE



# **EQUITY IN SCHOOL WATER AND SANITATION**

**Overcoming Exclusion and Discrimination  
in South Asia**

**A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

**Cover Photo:** © UNICEF/NEP/Sa.Shrestha

**© United Nations Children's Fund  
Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF ROSA) 2009**

**ISBN 978-9937-8215-6-8**

The views expressed are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of UNICEF. The designations in this publication do not imply an opinion on legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities, or the delimitation of frontiers.

Any parts of this document may be freely reproduced with the appropriate acknowledgement.

**For further information and copies, please contact**

**Regional Education Advisor  
UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)**  
P.O. Box 5815  
Lekhnath Marg  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Email: [rosa@unicef.org](mailto:rosa@unicef.org)

**Designed and colour separation:** Digiscan Pre-Press  
**Printed at:** Format Printing Press, Kathmandu, Nepal

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Series Introduction</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Rationale and Objectives	2
1.3 Organization and Methodology	3
<b>2. Context of Education and Water and Sanitation in the South Asia Region</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Education in South Asia	4
2.1.1 <i>Enrolment</i>	4
2.1.2 <i>Drop-out, repetition and non-attendance</i>	5
2.1.3 <i>Discrimination within school</i>	5
2.2 Water and Sanitation	6
<b>3. Findings and Analysis I – Water and Sanitation Facilities in Schools</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Drinking Water Facilities	9
3.2 Sanitation Facilities	10
3.3 Cleanliness of Facilities	11
3.4 Responsibility for Maintenance and Cleaning	11
3.5 Summary of Issues Arising out of the Findings	13
<b>4. Findings and Analysis II – Children who Face Exclusion or Discrimination in Relation to Water and Sanitation</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Menstruating Girls	15
4.2 Children who have Communicable Diseases	19
4.3 Children Perceived as Unclean	19
4.4 Favouritism and the Emergence of New Elites	24
4.5 Children with Disabilities	25
4.6 Summary of Findings	26
<b>5. Good Practice</b>	<b>28</b>
5.1 Examples of Good Practice	28
5.2 Key Themes to Inform Good Practice	30
5.2.1 <i>Sufficient and well maintained facilities</i>	30
5.2.2 <i>Clearly worked out systems for cleaning</i>	30
5.2.3 <i>Relationship between school and community</i>	32
5.2.4 <i>Awareness of the importance of good hygiene practices</i>	32
5.2.5 <i>An ethos of inclusion</i>	33
5.3 Summary of Findings on Good Practice	34

<b>6. Transfer of Good Practice from the School to the Community</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1 Transfer of Good Health and Hygiene Practice	35
6.2 Transfer of Good Non-Discrimination Practice	37
6.3 Summary of Transfer of Good Practice	40
<b>7. Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>41</b>
7.1 Conclusions	41
7.2 Recommendations	43
7.2.1 Sufficiency and maintenance of facilities	44
7.2.2 Inclusion and non-discrimination	45
7.2.3 Transfer of good practice from school to families and community	47
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Annex 1: Research Methodology for the Overall Study</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Annex 2: Further Good Practice Case Studies</b>	<b>53</b>

# Foreword

This series of five reports is the outcome of a study commissioned by UNICEF South Asia to look at issues of exclusion and discrimination related to water and sanitation in schools. Although there is considerable anecdotal evidence to show that many children are discriminated against, until now there has been little empirical evidence confirming this.

While each of the four participating countries have demonstrated that indeed there is such discrimination, this study has further highlighted several unexpected and encouraging findings.

It is clear that discriminatory attitudes are changing throughout the region. While some of the traditional practices are becoming less prevalent, there are signs of new elites emerging, based on wealth, ability, success and family influence rather than on religion and caste. Although there are negative aspects to this emergence, it does open up the possibility of children being able to bridge social divides, paving the way eventually to a more egalitarian society.

Very positively, the study confirms that schools are powerful agents of change for enabling and encouraging changes in society. Children are mixing with other children at school in ways that were unthinkable a generation ago. And while communities are often more conservative than schools, it is through children questioning traditional attitudes and practices that society is gradually changing. There is still a long way to go in some countries of the region, but change is most definitely happening.

All of the four participating countries show examples of excellent practice, and provide conclusions and recommendations that country practitioners can take forward. The Regional Perspective takes a broader view, synthesizing and expanding upon the country findings and showing them in a wider regional context.

These reports are an invaluable and unusual addition to the literature. They raise issues that need to be addressed by those operating at the level of national policy, by those involved in implementation, and at school level. Through such action exclusion and discrimination can be addressed and changed and lead us towards a true vision of inclusive education.



Daniel Toole  
Regional Director  
UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia



# Series Introduction

This series of five publications is the outcome of a South Asia regional study into Equity in School Water and Sanitation, commissioned jointly by the WASH and Education Sections of UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA). The study was carried out in four countries of the region – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal. Each country has produced its own report, and these have been supplemented by a fifth report, which summarizes the country reports and expands the findings into a regional perspective.

This study was developed following a web-based literature search (Ollieuz, 2008) to collect evidence about different kinds of water and sanitation-based exclusion and discrimination in schools in order to obtain an overview of available evidence and also to define areas which required more research. The search showed that although there is considerable anecdotal evidence on exclusion from and discrimination within school related to issues around water and sanitation, there is little in the way of empirical research.

The study therefore set out to examine these issues of exclusion and discrimination in schools in South Asia and to consider the potential for schools being able to act as agents of change in combating this exclusion and discrimination. The aim of the study was to:

*raise awareness both at Government and practitioner levels of the part that issues related to water and sanitation play in children's exclusion from and discrimination within education, and to suggest actions which need to be taken at the level of policy and practice which would help to redress this situation.*

The overall objectives of the study were:

- i. To examine the relationship between water and sanitation related issues and the ways in which they affect, for both practical and psychological reasons, both the inclusion and the opportunities of children who belong to groups that are perceived as being unclean, menstruating girls and children affected by communicable diseases.
- ii. To identify and record instances of good and inclusive practice.
- iii. To explore the possibility of good practice in schools having a transformative role in altering traditional discriminatory practices within the community.

The method chosen for the study was qualitative research. While qualitative research has certain limitations in that it can only ever cover a small sample of sites, the advantages are that it allows children's voices to be heard and their stories to be told in a way which can never occur through quantitative studies. In this way it highlights the often subtle ways in which exclusion and discrimination can affect children and also points to actions which need to be taken so that exclusion and discrimination can be addressed and changed.

In three of the four countries, twelve schools in three districts were carefully chosen for in-depth study (in India, 24 were chosen) and field researchers spent periods of three days covering the schools and their communities (one day in primary, one day in secondary and one day in the community). Although these were very small samples, nevertheless, it was felt that the in-depth discussions could draw out findings which would be more widely applicable.

In all countries, adolescent girls were seen to face considerable disadvantage when they were menstruating. The result was that a large proportion of girls simply did not attend school for several days each month. While the lack of sanitary facilities could not be directly linked with school drop-out, it seems certain that the embarrassment experienced by the girls, and their falling behind with their studies as a result of frequent absence, will increase its likelihood.

Findings on discrimination against children for issues related to water and sanitation were more mixed and varied both between countries and within individual countries. However, there certainly were indications that some children were treated less favourably than others. The ways in which this discrimination played itself out also varied, but it included situations where certain children were made to carry out tasks such as cleaning toilets when others were not; certain children being excluded from privileges such as fetching water for the teacher; and, in many instances, certain children always sitting separately from others at the back of the class. There were also clear indications that children who were discriminated against in this way could be perceived by teachers as being less intellectually able and less committed to their studies.

A clear message which emerged was that one could not make simple assumptions as to precisely which groups of children were discriminated against. In some instances, they were children from traditionally 'untouchable' castes, but not all Dalits were treated in this way. In some instances they were children from minority ethnic groups, but some ethnic groups did not face this kind of discrimination. In several cases they were the children who were perceived as always coming to school less clean than others, often because they lived far away or because they came from families who might not have the facilities to enable them to keep clean. In all countries it appeared that children from very poor families were more likely to be ones who could face this kind of discrimination.

A positive message arising from the study was that both children and adults were aware that traditional discriminatory attitudes were changing. While children in some schools expressed strongly traditional views about whom they would sit next to or eat with, several others were aware that school allowed them a place where they could share food and water with everyone and have mixed group friendships, although they did also say that they might not be able to extend this situation to their home context.

There were, however, indications in all countries that new elites could sometimes arise in this new context and play themselves out in the same domain of cleanliness and uncleanliness. Several instances were given of teachers favouring children who were clean, neat, clever, richer and from more powerful families. It was acknowledged that these children might or might not come from the traditional elites.

All country studies have examples of excellent practice. Ways in which this practice has been created vary from country to country but common elements include:

- ▶ Sufficient and well maintained facilities
- ▶ Clearly worked out systems of cleaning
- ▶ A positive relationship between school and community so that good practice in one is reinforced by good practice in the other. There are many examples of children transferring good hygiene practice they have learnt at school to their families
- ▶ Children who are aware of the importance of good hygiene practices
- ▶ A strong ethos of inclusion in which all tasks and privileges are shared equally and children are automatically assumed to sit together and mix together regardless of social or economic divisions.

Thus, the study has showed the potential of school as an agency of change and indicates that this is an area which could definitely benefit from further attention.

# Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to this regional study. I would like to thank:

Susan Durston (Regional Education Advisor) and William Fellows (Regional WATSAN Advisor) for their continuous support and advice and also for their vision in instigating this study.

Hilary Thornton, Lead Researcher for the Country Studies, for the skill she brought to designing the study and her dedicated ongoing support to all four country teams.

All members of the field research teams in all four countries:

Bangladesh: Mitra Associates and researchers Abu Naser and Nurjanahn Begum

Bhutan: Geo-Solutions and Lead Researcher Kinley Penjor

India: Eru Consultants Pvt. Ltd. and researchers Vimala Ramachandran, Bharat Patni and Nishi Mehrotra

Nepal: Centre for Educational Innovation and Development and Lead Researcher Narendra Phuyal.

Also all the children, teachers, parents and education officers who gave their time to talk with the research teams.

In addition I would like to thank staff in both the Education and WASH sections of UNICEF in all four countries for the support they gave to the study.

Finally I would like to thank all staff at UNICEF ROSA for their support, particularly Raka Rashid and Pushpa Chhetri of the Education Section and Lalita Gurung of the Young Child Survival Section.

Liz Maudslay

# Acronyms

BHU	Basic Health Unit
CLTS	Community Led Total Sanitation
CWSN	Children With Special Needs
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBC	Other Backward Classes
SC	Scheduled Caste
SLTS	School Led Total Sanitation
SMC	School Management Committee
SSHE	School Sanitation and Hygiene Education
TB	Tuberculosis
VDC	Village Development Committee
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation

# Executive Summary

This study examines issues of exclusion and discrimination in relation to water and sanitation in schools in South Asia and considers the potential for schools being able to act as agents of change in combating this exclusion and discrimination. The Education and WASH Sections of UNICEF ROSA had carried out an earlier literature search (Ollieuz, 2008) which showed that there was considerable literature related to water and sanitation based exclusion and discrimination involving adults but there was little written in terms of children and schools. The literature search revealed that further research was required particularly in relation to adolescent girls at times of menstruation, children with communicable diseases and children perceived as 'unclean' whether because of caste-based discrimination or for other reasons.

The overall objective of the study was to:

*raise awareness both at Government and practitioner levels of the part that issues related to water and sanitation play in children's exclusion from and discrimination within education, and to suggest actions which need to be taken at the level of policy and practice which would help to redress this situation.*

The method chosen for this study was qualitative research. While qualitative research has certain limitations in that it can only ever cover a small sample of sites, the advantages are that it allows children's voices to be heard and their stories to be told in a way which can never occur through quantitative studies. In this way it highlights the often subtle ways in which exclusion and discrimination

can affect children and also points to actions which need to be taken so that exclusion and discrimination can be addressed and changed.

## Findings

### *Facilities*

In all countries there were examples of schools with insufficient or inoperable water and sanitation facilities, hence creating a situation which disadvantaged all children. Research teams deliberately selected schools which had been provided with facilities. However, in many instances there appeared to be confusion as to who had responsibility both for maintenance and for providing simple necessities such as materials for cleaning and soap for handwashing.

### *Exclusion and discrimination*

In all countries adolescent girls were seen to face considerable disadvantage when they were menstruating. It was evident that most schools did not see supporting menstruating girls as a part of their role and, in interviews, girls spoke about the absence of any means of disposing of sanitary pads or washing cloths as well as facilities which did not allow them necessary privacy or dignity. The result was that a large proportion of girls simply did not attend school for several days each month.

Findings on discrimination against children for issues related to water and sanitation were more mixed and varied both between countries and within individual countries. However, there certainly were indications that some children were treated less favourably than others. The ways in which this discrimination played itself out also varied, but included situations where certain children were

made to carry out tasks such as cleaning toilets when others were not; certain children being excluded from privileges such as fetching water for the teacher; and, in many instances, certain children always sitting separately from others at the back of the class. There were also clear indications that children who were discriminated against in this way could be perceived by teachers as being less intellectually able and less committed to their studies.

A clear message which emerged was that one could not make simple assumptions as to precisely which groups of children were discriminated against. In some instances, they were children from traditionally 'untouchable' castes, but not all Dalits were treated in this way. In some instances they were children from minority ethnic groups, but some ethnic groups did not face this kind of discrimination. In several cases they were the children who were perceived as always coming to school less clean than others, often because they lived far away or because they came from families who might not have the facilities to enable them to keep clean. In all countries it appeared that children from very poor families were more likely to be ones who could face this kind of discrimination.

#### *A changing context*

A positive message arising from the study was that both children and adults were aware that traditional discriminatory attitudes were changing. While children in some schools expressed strongly traditional views about whom they would sit next to or eat with, several others were aware that school allowed them a place where they could share food and water with everyone and have mixed group friendships, although they did also say that they might not be able to extend this situation to their home context.

There were, however, indications in all countries that new elites could sometimes arise in this new context and play themselves out in the same domain of cleanliness and uncleanliness. Several instances were given of teachers favouring children who were clean, neat, clever, richer and from more powerful families. It was acknowledged that these children might or might not come from the traditional elites. It was also

recognized by both teachers and children that these were children who could be exempt from tasks such as cleaning.

#### *Good practice*

All country studies showed that practice was very varied and all of them had examples of excellent practice. Ways in which this practice had been created varied from country to country but common elements included:

- ▶ Sufficient and well maintained facilities
- ▶ Clearly worked out systems of cleaning
- ▶ A positive relationship between school and community so that good practice in one is reinforced by good practice in the other
- ▶ Children who are aware of the importance of good hygiene practices
- ▶ A strong ethos of inclusion in which all tasks and privileges are shared equally and children are automatically assumed to sit together and mix together regardless of social or economic divisions.

#### *Transfer of good practice from home to community*

There were many examples of children transferring good hygiene practice they had learnt at school to their families. There were also indications that this was far more likely to be successful if the school was part of a community which was also being targeted as a total sanitation area.

There was less indication that good practice children might learn at school in relation to non-discrimination was so easily transferred to home. This is not surprising. It is easier to suggest using soap or washing hands than to question deep-rooted social divisions. However, the study did show the potential of school as an agency of change and indicates that this is an area which could definitely benefit from further attention.

#### **What needs to happen as a result of this study?**

The study ends with several questions which need to be asked and changes which need to be made by policy makers, by managers, supervisors and trainers, and by those working in schools. However, all of these recommendations in

essence point to the same aim of creating schools which are truly inclusive.

An inclusive school is one in which all children are perceived and treated equally and in which all children are given an equal chance to succeed. Achieving this vision of inclusion requires change in many areas. It requires teachers who listen to children and try to respond to their concerns. It requires the allocation of tasks and privileges on

a basis of complete equality. It requires learning which takes place in an environment where all children mix together and sit next to each other. It requires teachers who do not make automatic assumptions about children's ability based on social or economic distinctions but believe that all children have the potential to succeed. It requires a belief that school can be an active force of change in altering traditional discriminatory behaviour.

The Conclusions and Recommendations from this Regional Perspective have also been included in each of the country studies, so that the country-level conclusions and recommendations can be seen in a wider regional context.



# 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Study

This study has been jointly commissioned by the WASH and Education Sections of UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia. The first phase of the study was a literature study carried out in order to ascertain what written evidence there was concerning water and sanitation related exclusion or discrimination in schools in South Asia. This was followed by four country studies carried out in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal with an overall aim to:

*raise awareness both at Government and practitioner levels of the part that issues related to water and sanitation play in children's exclusion from and discrimination within education, and to suggest actions which need to be taken at the level of policy and practice which would help to redress this situation.*

The current review discusses the findings of the individual country studies; however, the four country studies have also been published separately so that stakeholders in those countries can analyse the findings in more depth in their own unique context.

In recent years WASH sections of UNICEF, along with national governments and various INGOs and NGOs, have carried out considerable work in providing schools with water and sanitation facilities. However, WASH in Schools programmes recognize that their remit goes much wider than just providing water pumps and toilets. It also includes the very important role of hygiene awareness and of supporting schools to become agents of change where children can learn about

good hygiene behaviour and the reasons for this behaviour, and hence help to spread good practice to their families and the wider community.

In addition to this the rationale for this study was a recognition that deep-rooted attitudes about perceived cleanliness and uncleanliness can mean that water and sanitation can become a domain in which prejudices and stigma towards certain children can be acted out. This study aims particularly to look at whether certain children face exclusion or discrimination for reasons which are based on issues related to water and sanitation and whether schools, which are in some instances becoming agents of change in relation to hygiene practice, can also become agents of change in challenging other deep-rooted discriminatory practices.

This review begins with the rationale and objectives of the study and a brief description of its methodology. This is followed in Chapter Two by an overview of the context of education and water and sanitation provision in the region, including the important role that perceptions of 'clean' and 'unclean' play especially in South Asia.

The major findings of the country studies and an analysis of them are covered in Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Five looks at examples of good practice while Chapter Six examines the potential for transfer of good practice from school to families and community. Finally, Chapter Seven draws conclusions and provides recommendations that need to be addressed by those operating at the level of national policy, by those involved in implementation, and at school level. These conclusions and recommendations from this Regional Perspective have also been included in each of the country studies, so that the country-level conclusions and recommendations can be seen in a wider regional context.

The review will be of value to government officials in the South Asia region, to members of organizations which support governments and to all those involved both in education and in water and sanitation.

## 1.2 Rationale and Objectives

The study began with a web-based literature search (Ollieuz, 2008). The aim of this literature study was to collect evidence about different kinds of water and sanitation based exclusion and discrimination in schools in order to obtain an overview of available evidence and also to define areas which required more research. The study looked at evidence both of the availability of water and sanitation facilities in schools in South Asia and also at available literature related to Dalits or those considered 'untouchable', people with communicable diseases, in particular those with HIV/AIDS, TB and leprosy, menstruating girls and children with disabilities.

The study found that although there had been considerable research on the 'functions of caste', far less had been carried out on the concept of untouchability and the situation of Dalits, with certain exceptions, for example the study by Shah et al. (2006) which provided in-depth research about untouchability in eleven states in India. A search for specific evidence which examined the situation of Dalit children revealed that, while there was much anecdotal evidence about how Dalit children were discriminated against at school, for example being made to clean toilets, not being allowed to use the same water taps as other children, and discrimination in relation to midday meals, the evidence-based research on Dalits tended to be based on adults with few accounts specifically related to children.

Literature related to children affected by HIV/AIDS, leprosy and TB showed that the majority of research had not included effects on children, with the exception of HIV/AIDS-affected children in India being the only topic which has been documented to some extent at school. Literature on TB showed that despite the very high instances of cases throughout South Asia the disease still

carried a large amount of stigma. Also there was an assumption that it was far more highly infectious than it actually was and hence people with TB often hid their symptoms.

In terms of menstruating girls, the literature showed studies which have articulated the stigma and exclusion which can be faced by women when they are menstruating. It also showed that there have been some studies in the region which have examined the lack of adequate facilities at school for girls who are menstruating, but there has been little in the way of systematic studies which look at the actual impact that this has on girls' attendance.

When looking at children with disabilities the desk research found that there is considerable evidence throughout the region which shows how disabled children are significantly under-represented in school, but concluded that, while lack of access to suitable water and sanitation facilities might play a part in this exclusion, the overriding reasons for this exclusion tended to be other than those related to water and sanitation.

The conclusion of the literature research was that, although there is considerable anecdotal evidence on exclusion from and discrimination within school based on issues related to water and sanitation, there is little in the way of empirical research. It is in response to these findings that UNICEF ROSA commissioned this qualitative research study, the objectives of which are:

- i. To examine the relationship between water and sanitation related issues and the ways in which they affect, for both practical and psychological reasons, both the inclusion and the opportunities of children who belong to groups that are perceived as being unclean, menstruating girls and children affected by communicable diseases.
- ii. To identify and record instances of good and inclusive practice.
- iii. To explore the possibility of good practice in schools having a transformative role in altering traditional discriminatory practices within the community.

### 1.3 Organization and Methodology

The model selected for carrying out this study was to appoint a lead researcher and then select research teams in four designated South Asian countries. Countries invited to take part in the study were India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. The rationale for selection of countries was based primarily on the aim of ensuring as wide as possible a mix of religion, culture and social patterns.

An initial Inception Workshop, organized by UNICEF ROSA and led by the lead researcher, was held in Kathmandu. It was attended by two researchers, one male and one female, from each country team and wherever possible by UNICEF Country Representatives either from education or water and sanitation sections as well as by a country government official. The objectives of the Inception Workshop were to:

- ▶ Develop a common methodology for undertaking the country specific studies
- ▶ Develop a common approach to data collection
- ▶ Develop a draft set of qualitative tools
- ▶ Agree approaches to analysing and reporting on research
- ▶ Agree a schedule and workplan for undertaking the country studies.

It was agreed that each country would focus on three districts and within these districts look at six sites and twelve schools, with the exception of India which, because of its difference in size and complexity, would focus on only two districts but cover twelve sites and twenty-four schools.

Individual countries chose the sites in which they were to carry out research. However, they made this selection according to two overall criteria laid down by UNICEF ROSA. The first was that they should select sites where some provision had been made to provide schools with water and sanitation facilities. As the prime objective of this study was

to look at whether there was discrimination in access to water and sanitation facilities it was agreed that this could not be observed within schools which had no facilities and hence where all children were equally discriminated against. Secondly, countries were asked to select sites which included a range of children from different ethnic, social and economic groups.

Sites selected by countries were:

- ▶ In India – Lalitpur and Mirzapur Districts in Uttar Pradesh
- ▶ In Nepal – Chitwan, Tanahu and Kapilvastu Districts
- ▶ In Bhutan – Lhuentse, Samtse and Thimphu
- ▶ In Bangladesh – Noagoan, Comilla and Moulvibazar Districts

It was decided that some quantitative evidence would be obtained through looking at secondary source data, country and district level records, holding interviews with key government and UNICEF stakeholders, etc. However, it was also agreed that the main research would be qualitative and that qualitative data would be collected through focus group discussions, interviews, games and observations with children, teachers and community members. It was acknowledged that the sample was small but also that in-depth qualitative research was the only research methodology which allowed for the thorough exploration of the often subtle ways in which exclusion and discrimination manifested itself.

Research was carried out in a relatively short timescale. The Inception Workshop took place at the beginning of December 2008, documentary research and interviews with government personnel took place in December 2008, fieldwork was carried out in January and February 2009 and country reports were written up in March 2009. The lead researcher provided ongoing email support to country research teams and in February visited each team for one week accompanying them on one of their field trips.

# Context of Education and Water and Sanitation in the South Asia Region

South Asia is a region of paradoxes and contradictions. On the one hand it has made extraordinary advances in wealth and knowledge creation; on the other hand access to these resources is far from equitable with 2005 figures showing three countries in the region (India, Bangladesh and Nepal) having over 40 per cent of their population below the international poverty line of \$1.25 per day (UNICEF, 2009). Progress in terms of both quality of education and access to water and sanitation facilities reveals similar contradictions with, on the one hand, impressive advances yet, on the other hand, ongoing disparity and unequal distribution.

## 2.1 Education in South Asia

Over the past half century extraordinary advances have been made in education in South Asia. When looked at in the context of the baseline from which countries started, their achievement is remarkable. For example, primary enrolment in India has gone up six times from 19.2 million children in 1950 to 122.4 million in 2003; while Nepal, which now has a recorded enrolment of over 80 per cent, only provided education to a tiny proportion of children from the ruling families in the 1950s. Much of this progress occurred in the 1990s but even the most recent UNESCO figures on progress towards Education for All in the *Regional Overview for South and West Asia* (UNESCO, 2009) (which includes all South Asian countries and Iran) show that between 1999 and 2006 the number of new entrants into primary school rose by 11 per cent with several countries in the region recording enrolment figures of over 80 per cent.

However, positive as they are, these figures still leave the region with, according to UNESCO's figures (UNESCO, 2009), approximately 18 million children in 2006 out of school. UNICEF figures,

which also make use of household survey data, put this figure significantly higher at 35 million. As well as the children who never get enrolled there is also a depressingly high number of children who drop out and many more whose attendance is spasmodic. The UNESCO Overview also expresses considerable concern about the quality of education received by many children, due in part to lack of trained teachers and inadequate resources.

### 2.1.1 Enrolment

UNESCO's Overview (UNESCO, 2009) reveals that the Net Enrolment Ratio for the South and West Asia has increased to 86 per cent, while UNICEF gives a figure of 83 per cent for South Asia. In both cases these figures are far from being universal across the region and there are still substantial divisions between countries; for example, while UNICEF and UNESCO both record Net Enrolment Rate for the Maldives and Sri Lanka as being around 97 per cent, that of Pakistan was only 66 per cent according to UNESCO and 56 per cent according to UNICEF. The UNESCO Overview also shows considerable variation within countries with, in India, Bangladesh and Nepal, 30–40 per cent of children not attending school coming from the poorest two quintiles. Increasingly, enrolment figures within the region are being disaggregated and we are beginning to gain a clearer figure of which children never enrol in school and the reasons for their non-enrolment.

The Mid-Decade Assessment of Education for All conducted throughout Asia in 2007/08 highlighted groups of children particularly likely to be excluded. They include:

- ▶ Children from remote and rural areas
- ▶ Children from religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities as well as indigenous peoples
- ▶ Children from migrant families

- ▶ Children with disabilities or special needs
- ▶ Street children, working children and children in difficult circumstances (conflict or disaster areas)
- ▶ Orphans and abandoned children
- ▶ Children of very poor families
- ▶ Girls, especially from rural/ethnic communities.

Important as it is to list these categories it is also important to recognize that many children experience multiple disparities and their exclusion from school cannot be neatly encapsulated by one factor but is the result of a complex range of interdependent situations.

In addition to these 'demand' factors there are also significant 'supply' factors which jeopardize children's chances of enrolling at school. These have been summarized (Durstun *et al.*, 2008) as including the facts that:

- ▶ Education is not free and/or affordable for all children
- ▶ Schools are not always accessible to all children
- ▶ Schools are not always equally welcoming and acceptable to all communities, groups and individuals
- ▶ There is unequal provision of quality schools
- ▶ Schools do not provide equal opportunities for all children.

### 2.1.2 Drop-out, repetition and non-attendance

Drop-out from school across the region remains high. Once again data varies, with UNESCO reporting higher drop-out rates than those recorded in UNICEF household surveys. Figures given in the UNESCO Regional Overview 2009 say that only 73 per cent of enrolled children across the region complete primary education. Once again this figure varies between countries, with Bangladesh having a primary completion rate of only 65 per cent. Leaving aside discrepancies between different sets of data, it is certainly likely that the actual situation regarding non-attendance or non-achievement is far worse than that implied by the official non-completion rate. Completion rate figures are assessed purely on the numbers of children who complete the cycle of primary education. They do not take account of the large

numbers of children who have to repeat grades. UNESCO figures show high repetition rates in Afghanistan and Nepal and state that in Nepal repetition rates in Grade 1 exceed 30 per cent. Over and above these recorded figures are the numbers of children who, for a variety of reasons, are either regularly absent or not attending school for long periods of time. Drop-out is not a clear-cut event and, as has been shown in a recent briefing from the Consortium for Research on Education, Transition and Equity, there are many children who might be formally enrolled at school but may also have erratic attendance and be at risk of dropping out as well as being 'silently excluded if their attendance is spasmodic' (CREATE, 2008). The extent of non-attendance at school was starkly reflected in a report brought out by ASER in India in 2005. This stated that on the one day during which a survey was carried out, 51 per cent of enrolled children were not actually present in school.

### 2.1.3 Discrimination within school

Enrolment, retention and attendance have tangible indicators against which they can be measured. What is much harder to measure is discrimination which can take place within schools and which can have such negative effects on children's inclusion, happiness, self-esteem and ultimately on their achievement. The literature review which preceded this study gave much anecdotal evidence of instances where children felt separated out from others within school for issues related to water and sanitation, for example menstruating girls in schools which had not considered the need for private places in which they could change or wash their sanitary rags, or Dalit children being refused permission to use the drinking tap used by non-Dalits. Sainath (*The Hindu*, 1999), writing in India, describes clearly the way in which children from certain scheduled castes can be ostracized at school through other children mocking their perceived uncleanness. He describes Savitri who is from the 'bhangli' community in Gujarat, a community which makes its living by scavenging in rubbish. The women scavengers often have the task of cleaning dry latrines and while they do this they will pull the edge of their saris over their nose and grip it in their teeth. In Savitri's words:

*The moment I enter the room in school, the other children make faces. They start singing 'the bhagri has come'. The words of the song are foul and insulting ... They bite the side of their collar, push their noses up. Sometimes put a hanky to their faces. I would start crying but it doesn't matter to them.*

For Savitri the issue is not a practical one of access to facilities but an attitudinal one of being regarded as unclean. For her to feel comfortable at school the focus needs to be not simply on ensuring that Dalit groups have access to school, but on creating inclusive schools where discrimination is not tolerated and where every child feels equally welcome and respected.

## 2.2 Water and Sanitation

Between 1990 and 2006 South Asia achieved the greatest global increase in the percentage of people having access to safe drinking water with the percentage now having increased to 87 per cent (WHO/UNICEF 2008). However, there are still wide discrepancies both between countries and also between rural and urban areas. In terms of sanitation, although improvements have been made especially in urban areas, 2006 figures show that open defecation is still practised by 48 per cent of people in South Asia – the highest percentage of any region in the world (WHO/UNICEF, 2008).

The decade between 1980 and 1990 was proclaimed as the UN International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. From this time onwards increasing attention has been paid by governments, UNICEF and a range of larger and smaller INGOs and NGOs to extend the coverage of schools with water and sanitation facilities. Within this context a leading non-government player has been the IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre<sup>1</sup> which began to instigate SSHE

(School Sanitation and Hygiene Education), more recently designated as WASH in Schools (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools).

In the 1980s and early 1990s these programmes focused largely on the construction of water points and toilets in schools. However, as the programmes continued, an approach was advocated which involved far more than simply providing schools with hardware facilities. SSHE/WASH programmes began increasingly to be designed on the basis of a child-to-child approach which ensures that children themselves feel responsible for water and sanitation facilities, that schools promote good hygiene practice amongst all children, and that children become agents of behavioural change and are empowered to take back some of the new practices they have learnt into their community. The positive nature of the SSHE/WASH approach has now been universally recognized and is being adopted throughout South Asia as well as globally.

Building on earlier experiences, IRC and UNICEF started an initiative to implement SSHE on a wider scale from 2000. Nepal was the only South Asian representative of the six countries (the others were Burkina Faso, Colombia, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Zambia) selected for this pilot initiative. In 2005 a study was carried out assessing the impact and benefits of SSHE in these six countries prior to proposed scaling up of the model. The Nepal assessment showed a 75 per cent success rate of the pilot SSHE programme. In three-quarters of the communities which were visited, schools had been fitted with good quality facilities and these had helped to increase the number of children attending school. Children's hygiene behaviour had changed considerably and children were transferring this practice from school to the community. Children felt a sense of ownership of the facilities and were supported to work as a group (through existing Child Clubs) to help maintain them. Moreover, teachers, parents and community members were committed to the projects which also had strong district level support. The evaluation did, however, express

<sup>1</sup> 'IRC' comes from International Reference Centre for Community Water Supply, which was its name from the founding of the organization in 1968 to mid-1980, when it changed to IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre ([www.irc.nl](http://www.irc.nl)).

certain concerns. The SSHE model supported projects for three years with the intention that during that time good water and sanitation practice would become embedded in the pilot schools and good practice would be scaled up by being spread to other schools in the district. The evaluation showed that this embedding might not always occur, particularly in poorer schools, and that the inability of poor schools to make financial contributions to the programme had directly affected scaling up despite schools' willingness to participate.

The findings of the Nepal assessment, which is the most comprehensive carried out in South Asia, helps to guide suggestions as to what is required if effective water and sanitation programmes in schools are to be implemented. It shows that, if they are to be effective, these programmes require good coordination at district level with joint input both from water and sanitation and education officials along with carefully documented record

keeping. They also require strong commitment from all stakeholders – teachers, parents, children and community members – and sufficient enthusiasm and financial input to sustain and scale up the project after its initial phases. Finally, programmes will not be sustained without a sense of ownership by children themselves. This involves support being given to organizations such as Child Clubs or Children's Health Clubs which allow children to take responsibility for implementing programmes and maintaining facilities.

The SSHE/WASH in Schools programmes have been immensely valuable in recognizing the crucial part which access to water and sanitation facilities plays in education. This review hopes to explore in depth the multi-faceted relationship between water and sanitation and education in South Asia and to provide evidence on the extent to which and the ways in which issues relating to water and sanitation can exclude and discriminate against certain children.

### Perceptions of 'Clean' and 'Unclean'

Value judgements based on notions of impurity or cleanliness are certainly not confined to South Asia: 'in some sense all cultures, all systems of classification, exhibit an opposition of pure and impure' (Quigley, 1998). Douglas (1966, 2002) explains in detail how all societies have ways of reordering the environment which entails making a distinct separation between 'clean' and 'unclean'. In all societies there are examples of certain individuals being looked down upon or shunned because they are seen as being unclean and also as having the power to contaminate others, sometimes by virtue of their social or economic status or sometimes at certain times of their life, for example women who are menstruating or individuals with certain diseases such as leprosy or AIDS. In South Asia such concepts of purity and pollution can appear to be particularly deeply embedded in society.

In Hindu societies these concepts are often seen to be reinforced by the caste system. Theories and interpretations of caste vary widely and, as Quigley (1998) says, 'there are few concepts in general anthropological use which cause as much confusion as the word "caste".' Dumont (1970, cited in Bayly, 2001) has had considerable global influence in depicting caste relations in terms of an opposition of purity and pollution which he sees as fundamentally pervading the thought processes of all Hindus. Dumont believed that the rigidity of the Indian caste system led to a society which was based solely on a hierarchical structure and he opposed this to Euro-American society which he saw as being structured around a basis of equality. More recently many critics have challenged Dumont's views saying that they make India into 'a land of static oriental spirituality rather than action and agency'. There have also been critics of Dumont who have felt that he has ignored material and economic differences and who have argued that caste is less 'a timeless expression of age-old traditional values, but ... a product of economic and social changes in comparatively modern times' (Bayly, 2001). However, all interpretations seem to agree that there are undoubtedly very deep-rooted links between notions of high caste with purity and low or untouchable caste with defilement.

Two of the main areas where differences between high and low castes have traditionally been enacted are in relation to untouchability and to the acceptance of food and water. The Muluki Ain (the Nepal Legal Code of 1854) makes these connections explicit when it defines ‘untouchable castes’ as those ‘from whom water is not acceptable and whose touch requires the sprinkling of holy water’ (Barr *et al.*, 2007, pp.2–3). While both India and Nepal have for some years had laws in place which prohibit caste-based discrimination, and while traditional practices are changing particularly in more urbanized areas, discriminatory practices in terms of not sharing water taps, not wanting to touch, or not receiving food or water from those considered to be from an unclean caste still continue.

Notions of uncleanliness are often related to occupation, with specific groups of workers such as garbage collectors or latrine cleaners being perceived as impure or unclean in many parts of the region. In Hindu cultures such jobs tend to be performed by specific untouchable castes who are seen as being the groups who ‘absorb pollution’ (Quigley, 1998) and hence can pollute other higher castes if they touch them. However, even in non-Hindu cultures within the region, it has been acknowledged that similar kinds of discrimination can exist. For example, the Bangladesh Government 2005 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper speaks of the negative treatment given to small groups of extremely poor people who belong to specific occupations and states that, ‘although in Bangladesh there is no caste system per se, these groups are treated the way lower castes are treated as untouchables in a caste system’ (Government of Bangladesh, 2005, p.160).

In South Asia, in common with many societies throughout the world, notions of impurity and pollution are often associated with beliefs that contact with women at certain times can pose a danger to men (Douglas, 2002). Women who are menstruating or women immediately after childbirth have, throughout the world, traditionally been considered to be unclean and have been required to practise various purification rituals at these times. In certain areas of South Asia menstruating women are not expected to enter public places or to prepare foods (Kirk and Sommer, 2006). In some isolated areas of the region women are still expected to move out of their home and live in a special hut or cow shed during menstruation (Kandel *et al.*, n.d.). However, there is also evidence to show that exclusionary practices of this kind are significantly decreasing (Ullrich, 1992).

Discrimination against those perceived to be unclean can be overt - refusal to drink from the same tap or pull water from the same well, or exclusion of women to their own separate dwelling place while they are menstruating. It can also be less overt and more subtle but equally hurtful - moving away from certain groups when in a crowd or choosing not to sit next to people considered unclean or impure.

# 3

## Findings and Analysis I – Water and Sanitation Facilities in Schools

### 3.1 Drinking Water Facilities

Different schools had different types of water facilities with some using tube-wells, some having a piped water supply and others using hand pumps. Children's access to drinking water varied enormously. In Bhutan, where all schools visited had access to a piped water supply, the standard ratio is one tap stand for every 50 students. However, the research stated that 8 schools out of the 13 studied had a shortage of water and that in six of these the shortage was acute with one school having a ratio of 498 students per tap stand. In Bangladesh, all schools had access to tube-well water but the student ratio varied considerably, with the lowest ratio in a school in Naogaon which had 104 students sharing one well and the highest in a school in Comilla where 867 students shared the same tube-well. In India, three of the schools visited did not have a hand pump and a further four had hand pumps which were dysfunctional. In Nepal, children in Tanahu district had good access to safe drinking water and in Chitwan there was provision of water in a storage tank in all schools visited. In Kapilvastu all schools visited had two hand pumps but in all cases only one was working and in one school one hand pump was used by 1,147 students. Nepal schools also reported an acute shortage of water because of electricity load shedding.

Concern was also expressed in all countries regarding the safety of water. The Comilla district in Bangladesh and the Chitwan district in Nepal both had tube-wells which were arsenic-affected. In India, two of the schools in Lalitpur had water that was not potable. In Bhutan, teachers expressed concern about water contamination during the monsoon season and shortage during the agricultural season.

In both Nepal and Bangladesh it was reported that small children had difficulty using the hand pumps because they were too high and they could not reach the handle and press it down. In several schools in all four countries the ratio between hand pump and children meant that children had to wait in very long queues if they wanted to drink:

*Some boys from a school said that if they waited for their turn in the school it would take one to one-and-a-half hours to get water. (Nepal Report)*

Children had developed different means of adapting to this situation. Some of them brought water with them while others who lived nearby sometimes went home or to nearby houses to get a drink. Others used hand pumps outside the school premises. In some classrooms teachers had arranged for a bucket of drinking water to be available for children, but this was not automatic practice in all schools.

The study shows how in many of the schools visited in all four countries access to drinking water was not adequate. While some provision had been made in all schools, children were often not able to obtain clean drinking water when they needed it either because of facilities which were not well maintained, or because of water which was unsafe, or, most frequently, because the quantity of facilities was not sufficient to cater for the number of students. It appeared that children had found ways of adapting to this situation and in interviews carried out they did not mention lack of drinking water facilities as a particular problem. However, the fact that some of them went to their own or a friend's house to get water is inevitably disruptive to their studies and, for those children

who could not return home, the lack of water, especially during the hot season, is likely to be detrimental both to their health and their ability to study.

### 3.2 Sanitation Facilities

Various types of toilets were found in different sites. Bhutan reported that the schools they visited showed examples of pit, drainage, aqua privy and pour flush latrines. They also said that pit latrines tended to fill up and become blocked easily. Many of the schools in all four countries had toilets which needed to be flushed by children fetching water either from a hand pump or from pond water. Broken water pumps or shortages of water inevitably made flushing difficult. In India Mirzapur district, out of the eleven schools three had running water, five were flushed by water from a hand pump or tank while three had no access to water. In Lalitpur district, only four were flushed by water from a hand pump and eight did not have access to water. In Bangladesh, none of the toilets had access to running water and water for flushing was obtained from hand pumps or ponds. In Nepal, Tanahu had toilets with water access; in Chitwan, while toilets were provided with water, electricity problems meant that the water was not available; and in Kapilvastu there was a lack of proper water supply in the toilets. In both Chitwan and Kapilvastu, the lack of water provision in the toilets meant that many students used them only as urinals and went outside to defecate. Concern was also expressed about the siting of toilets in relation to water facilities. For example, Bangladesh spoke about several instances where water was located at a considerable distance from toilets thus discouraging children from bringing water in order to flush them.

Where toilets were available, considerable concern was expressed by teachers and children about their sufficiency. Most schools had separate toilet facilities for boys and girls although one school in Bangladesh was reported as having one toilet for 485 children with boys and girls using the same toilet. In another school there was one toilet for 457 girls and one for 410 boys. In Bhutan the ratio was better with 7 out of the 13 schools meeting the Bhutan standard ratio of one toilet for 40 boys, and the highest ratio found being one toilet for 151 girls. In most of the schools in all

four countries staff had their own toilets, usually one common one for male and female staff. However, in one school in Bhutan where pit latrines were in use, there were no separate facilities for staff and one female teacher said:

*It is very disturbing psychologically. We waste lots of our time, looking for toilets in the neighbourhood. (Bhutan Report)*

Two female teachers in India said they were embarrassed to use the staff toilet because it meant they had to go through the principal's room. Interestingly in Tanahu in Nepal, where there was adequate provision of toilets with water for flushing, it was reported by an official at district level that the decision had been made not to construct separate toilets for teachers as it was felt that teachers would ensure that toilets were better looked after if teachers had to use them as well as students.

In many cases the design of toilets was not felt to be appropriate and all sites reported that toilets were not accessible by children with physical disabilities. Concern was expressed that toilet doors often closed inwards, thus making it difficult for children with mobility difficulties to enter. Several girls mentioned that toilets did not have an inside lock hence did not allow sufficient privacy. One toilet in Chitwan in Nepal had no roof and girls felt uncomfortable using it because boys would sometimes tease them by throwing stones inside. In one instance in Kapilvastu in Nepal the student toilets were reported to be locked because it was 'feared they would be inappropriately used by students'. In India too there was a report of one girls' toilet being locked and used for teachers. In Bangladesh it was reported that on the whole teachers enjoyed better toilet facilities than children and in one school which had one toilet for all the children and one for the teachers the teachers' toilet was kept locked. Although the teachers said that children could ask them for the key in case of an emergency, the researchers did not observe any children asking for the key and did observe many boys going to urinate outside rather than join the long queue for the children's toilet.

The negative situation described above was not universally the case. All countries reported at least one school which had good and sufficient, well-

maintained facilities. Case studies of these and some analysis of what made them good will be covered in Chapter Five. However, in many of the schools visited the lack of upkeep, the lack of water for flushing and the very high ratio of children to toilets resulted in children in several schools having very inadequate access to toilet facilities. Several examples were given of children finding their own way of adapting to this situation: for example, in one school in Bangladesh where the girls' toilet is in front of the school and the pond from which they have to get water to flush it is behind it was shown how:

*... one girl would collect water from the pond and pass it through the toilet's window to other girls. That way they maintain privacy from boys.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

However, in many instances, children were seen to opt for the simpler solution of going elsewhere, either to friends' houses or outside in the open, if they wanted to urinate or defecate.

### 3.3 Cleanliness of Facilities

The cleanliness – or lack of cleanliness – and the issue of who was responsible for cleaning toilet facilities was raised several times in all four country research reports. Once again all four countries gave instances of toilets which were kept clean and examples of these will be given in detail in Chapter Five. However, they had far more examples of toilets which were extremely dirty and reported considerable confusion over whose responsibility it was to keep them clean.

The Bangladesh report gives instances where toilet cleaning is not considered an important issue but is simply a matter of occasionally 'throwing water' down the toilets. It also shows how only a very few of the schools provided any toilet cleaning materials. Bhutan gives a mixed picture where problems over cleanliness were shown to be more severe amongst the community and primary schools than middle and higher secondary schools, and puts this down to the fact that 'unlike middle and higher secondary schools, community and primary schools do not have a separate budget from the government'. Nepal reports very

varied findings with toilets in Tanahu having high levels of cleanliness whereas those in Chitwan and Kapilvastu were described as 'filthy' with, in some schools, 'the entire school premises smelled bad, partly because the toilets were not cleaned and partly because students urinated around the school compound'. In India, while in Mirzapur which was part of a total sanitation campaign most toilets and compounds were reported as being clean, in Lalitpur district seven out of the twelve schools had toilets which were either 'dirty' or in most cases 'very dirty'.

In terms of children's facilities for keeping themselves clean, only a few of the good practice schools provided soap for handwashing. In many instances handwashing consisted solely of children rinsing their hands with water. In one school in Bangladesh soap was theoretically available but was kept in the teacher's room and children had to ask permission to use it because, teachers claimed, 'students misuse soap and sometimes the soap falls inside the pan due to children's carelessness'. The same school also kept the only drinking glass locked away.

### 3.4 Responsibility for Maintenance and Cleaning

Many different examples were given both between countries and within countries about who, if anyone, was responsible for keeping toilets maintained and clean. In all countries children played a considerable role in cleaning toilets as is described below. The extent to which there was discrimination in terms of which children carried out this task will be discussed in Chapter Four.

In Bangladesh, it was reported that there are no national guidelines as to how responsibility should be passed down to local level. In the absence of clear guidelines headteachers and SMC take on de facto responsibility, although as one teacher in Bangladesh said, 'there is an annual plan regarding maintenance but officially no teacher is instructed to be responsible for WATSAN.' Another headteacher summed up the situation by saying that issues related to water and sanitation in schools are 'everybody's responsibility' which then became 'nobody's responsibility'. In the absence of any designated budget some headteachers and School Management Committees had responded

proactively raising funds and in some cases employing someone to clean the toilets. Where a toilet cleaner was not employed the cleaning was done by the children in primary schools, but it seemed not done much at all in secondary.

In Bhutan, a similar lack of clarity was reported over who had ultimate responsibility for water and sanitation facilities in schools, particularly when repairs were needed. Where channels for maintenance and repair were seen to exist they were felt to be very time-consuming. In practice, cleaning of latrines tended to be done by students and caretakers, although in many cases school management boards had taken the decision to also employ a 'wet sweeper' for toilet cleaning.

The Nepal report noted different practices in relation to the cleaning of toilets. In Kapilvastu and Chitwan, either the peon or the children cleaned the toilets although some of the teachers said that a lack of water and also no money allocated to pay for cleaning materials meant that in some cases no cleaning took place. The School Management Committee disagreed with this reason and implied that teachers were not always doing enough to keep toilets clean. In Tanahu, very different practice was recorded with Child Clubs taking responsibility to organize a rota for toilet cleaning supported by a teacher and all toilets having appropriate cleaning materials.

The Indian report expressed a concern at Departmental level that there is a 'lack of coordination between departments' and a lack of coordinated working between those involved in water and sanitation and those involved in education. In India, responsibility for daily cleaning lay with the children with a few schools employing someone to carry out a weekly clean. In India, Mirzapur district rated far higher than Lalitpur in terms of cleanliness. One of the reasons for the Indian team selecting Mirzapur for this study was the presence of a fully fledged district level school sanitation programme in tandem with a village sanitation programme through the Panchayati Raj Department with financial support from UNICEF. On the other hand Lalitpur, also a UNICEF focus district, is still to implement the convergent programme. In a good practice example from Mirzapur (to be discussed in detail in Chapter Five) the India report shows the results which can be

achieved when one individual takes on a key leadership role, in this case the village pradhan:

*The agency of the pradhan has been critical in making people aware and educated about sanitation and for providing the infrastructure and spending funds allocated for its construction and maintenance.  
(India Report)*

In all countries children also had responsibility for cleaning classrooms and in many schools for tidying the school grounds. The success of this varied, with some environments reported as very clean and others far less well looked after. In Bangladesh, India and Nepal, mention was made that in some schools the lack of a boundary wall meant that people from outside the school could use and make dirty the school grounds.

Different views were expressed about having children carry out cleaning in school. While there was a general feeling that this helped to instil a sense of responsibility and ownership, which was certainly the case in Tanahu in Nepal, there was a feeling, particularly in the India report, that it could also be exploitative of children and take them away from their education. The irony was also pointed out that, in cleaning the toilets first thing in the morning, children themselves became wet and dirty:

*... while children come to school neat and clean in the morning, they are covered with dust after performing their cleaning duties. Many of them were wet and cold after this assignment. They were observed to be shivering in wet clothes after washing toilets and watering the plants. Facilities for them to dry themselves and change clothes do not exist.  
(India Report)*

Children themselves expressed different views on having to clean toilets. In Bhutan, where older children cleaned the toilets on a rotational basis, there were instances of some students volunteering to carry out these duties as they

received a certificate of appreciation and a small amount of cash. In other cases students chose to clean toilets to avoid other school activities such as digging pits, clearing flower beds or cleaning the surroundings. The children in Tanahu in Nepal appeared proud of the role they played in organizing and carrying out cleaning. However, others expressed their unhappiness about it. In a role play in one of the Indian schools, children acted out sweeping and cleaning the toilets first thing in the morning and said:

*Why do government school children have to do this?  
(India Report)*

In India too, it emerged from almost all discussions that:

*Parents do not like their children to clean the premises and toilets and they depend on the village sweeper paid for by the pradhan for such services. So if the pradhan is proactive and concerned about the school, a sweeper becomes available, otherwise cleaning the school campus and toilets remains a problem.  
(India Report)*

The India report also questioned the way in which an emphasis on keeping school facilities clean could sometimes be at the expense of a concentration on teaching and learning. The report states that in four of the schools visited ‘a lot of time and energy goes into beautifying and cleaning the facilities’ but that in these schools ‘regular teaching and learning took a back seat.’

There is some mention by researchers in India and Bangladesh of gender differentiation in the allocation of cleaning duties, but this tends to be in terms of the nature of duties rather than in one gender being exempt from cleaning. In India we are told that boys tend to do the outside tasks such as cleaning the compound while girls clean inside. In Bangladesh we are told that girls clean the classrooms and boys the toilets. However, there is considerable evidence in some schools of other forms of discrimination in the allocation of duties which will be discussed in Chapter Four below.

### 3.5 Summary of Issues Arising out of the Findings

The findings from the four countries in terms of the nature of facilities revealed that, while all schools had water and sanitation facilities, availability of good quality water and toilets for children varied enormously. While some of this was evidently a resource issue – schools simply did not have sufficient water pumps and toilets – one clear fact which emerges is the high number of facilities which were either not functioning or which were in such an unclean state that children chose not to use them. There seemed in all countries, although not in all districts, to be a lack of overall responsibility for the provision and the maintenance of water and sanitation facilities in schools, summed up by the phrase used in the Bangladesh report: ‘everybody’s responsibility is nobody’s responsibility’.

As has been shown in Chapter Two, a plethora of different NGOs have played a part in providing school water and sanitation facilities. While this has resulted in some excellent programmes, these do not always appear to have been matched by a strategic policy at government level. The result is that, while individual programmes can work very effectively while funds are provided, there appears to be little system in place for sustainability. There is a clear message that projects on their own only appear to benefit the specific area in which they work unless they are combined with a clear strategy on the part of government.

In several instances there appeared to be no designated budget for maintenance or cleaning and no-one seemed quite sure who to turn to if repairs were needed or if they wished to employ a cleaner. In such a vacuum it was all too easy for facilities to remain broken and dirty and for children to prefer not to use school facilities but instead to go to friends’ houses or to urinate and defecate outside.

Within this context good or bad practice was often determined by one individual. The committed pradhan could ensure that a sweeper was employed or facilities repaired, or the concerned teacher could arrange for a bucket of drinking water to be placed in the classroom. Alternatively, individual teachers could decide to lock a toilet or

keep soap in a separate room in an attempt to protect facilities while being seemingly impervious to their function.

Cleaning in all countries tended to be carried out by students, sometimes with the help of a sweeper. The efficacy of this cleaning appeared to be very dependent upon the support given by teachers and the extent to which children had access to cleaning materials. There were several examples given in India of children feeling resentful at having to clean toilets, a resentment shared by their parents, and the researchers pointed out the irony that children who cleaned the toilet often had to remain wet

and dirty for the rest of the day. There was also concern that in some schools there was undue emphasis on cleaning the school to the detriment of time available for teaching and learning. However, the example in Tanahu in Nepal, where teachers shared the same toilet as children and also shared the task of cleaning it, where children were provided with proper cleaning facilities, and also where the Child Club was given the responsibility to organize the cleaning, suggested that having children clean toilets can be done in a way which is not only acceptable but also a matter of pride for the children. (For a detailed description of schools in Tanahu see Chapter Five.)

# 4

## Findings and Analysis II – Children who Face Exclusion or Discrimination in Relation to Water and Sanitation

The previous chapter showed how, when water and sanitation facilities are insufficient, inadequate, badly maintained or unclean, all children are affected. This chapter focuses on particular children who experienced either exclusion or discrimination in relation to water and sanitation and the effects which this had on their education. The chapter shows how exclusion occurs when facilities are not appropriate to cater for the requirements of certain children. In many instances this exclusion was temporary, particularly apparent in the case of menstruating girls who experienced temporary exclusion each month because of inadequate facilities. Discrimination, which tended to be ongoing rather than temporary, occurred when certain children were, either consciously or unconsciously, treated less well than other children in issues related to water and sanitation, for example children who were regarded as less clean than others, children who felt they needed to sit separately from others, children who were not allowed to use the same water pump as others or children who were disproportionately picked on to carry out tasks such as cleaning toilets while other children were exempt from these tasks.

The chapter begins by looking at the three groups suggested in the terms of reference for the research – menstruating girls, children with communicable diseases and children perceived to be unclean. It then goes on to examine other themes which emerged in relation to exclusion or discrimination against certain children.

### 4.1 Menstruating Girls

All country reports stated that menstruating girls were the group of students who were most discriminated against in terms of sanitation facilities:

*The least considered area seemed to be the needs of menstruating adolescent girls.*  
(Nepal Report)

*All girls from the three sites reported about the facilities at school and said that the toilets are not suitable for use during menstruation as there is no provision for changing, washing and drying cloths.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

*The situation of adolescent girls who come to secondary school is affected by the poor infrastructure and sanitation facilities. They have to exercise self-control while in school, and absent themselves during menstrual periods.*  
(India Report)

*The interaction with the girl students clearly indicated the difficulties they faced.*  
(Bhutan Report)

Girls' concerns included both the issue of changing sanitary cloths or disposing of pads and also lack of privacy:

*Plenty of water is required during menstruation. So we have to carry the water pot several times to and from the tube-well, which is embarrassing as the tube-well is not close enough to the toilet. It is situated in an open space, always surrounded by many boys and girls.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

The situation was made worse by toilets without doors or doors without locks. When they used cloths girls stated that there was nowhere suitable for changing, washing and drying them. When they used pads they said that there were no facilities for disposal, and in both India and Bangladesh girls reported that stray dogs would sometimes pick up their discarded pads. Girls often resorted to throwing pads into the toilet, although this caused blockages:

*I throw the sanitary pads inside the toilet only because the pit is outside the toilet and I feel shy to throw them there. The boys also tease us, saying that we smell.*  
(Bhutan Report)

In one school in Bhutan girls talked about their embarrassment as the only place in which they could dispose of their pads was the pit latrine which was meant for younger children; hence when older girls went to use it everyone would know they were menstruating. Individual teachers had sometimes attempted to provide solutions. In Bhutan we were told that some urban schools have made attempts to improve facilities for girls and had made arrangements to bring in a supply of pads, as is the case in one school in India. But these were individual initiatives and not the result of any overall government or school policy.

The result of the lack of provision for menstruating girls was often acute embarrassment and anxiety:

*Our school uniform is of white colour. Can you guess the situation*

*when menstruation starts at school? This is a common incident. Teachers send us home under such circumstances.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

Both teachers' and girls' response to the lack of facilities for menstruating girls was very often to assume that they would take time off each month. In India this seemed to be common practice and it was reported that the majority of adolescent girls took days off, only coming to school if they had examinations. Girls were also reported taking days off in the Chitwan district of Nepal (a finding echoed by a very recent WaterAid Nepal study which studied four districts and found that 53 per cent of adolescent girls reported having been absent at least once due to menstruation). Girls in Bhutan did not seem to take so much time off but they did mention sometimes needing to go home. In Bangladesh, while a few girls did mention coming to school during menstruation so as to avoid missing out on financial incentives, in general several girls appeared to miss days. Teachers seemed very willing to grant permission for children to take time off, thus contributing to what often seems to become a habit of inattendance:

*If any girl reports sickness to any teacher, the teacher grants her leave to go home without asking anything about the sickness. Some girls lose interest in attending school and they remain absent for 7–10 days once they start to be irregular.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

Muslim girls at one school said they would go to their own homes or the homes of Muslim friends who lived nearby in order to change pads or cloths. However, the few Adivasi girls in their class tended to live further away and not to have Muslim friends. These Adivasi girls tend to go home when they start menstruating and it was reported that, in the interests of safety, a girl is sent with them resulting in two girls missing their lessons. Certainly in Bangladesh girls were aware of the affect this absenteeism had on their learning:

*We miss the lessons and cannot answer the questions from those*

*lessons in the examination, Sometimes we try to learn the missed lesson from our friends but still we cannot grasp the whole lesson as the teachers teach the next lesson in class and we have to work on that.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

School Management Committee members felt that this regular absenteeism certainly had detrimental effects on girls' success at school and might contribute to them eventually dropping out altogether:

*During menstruation, many girls remain absent from school and cannot prepare the lesson for the next class. That may make them feel inferior and have less interest in study. Consequently they might continuously skip school and drop out.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

Mothers too expressed their concern about the missed opportunity when girls had to be absent for so many lessons. As one mother said:

*Should I keep my daughter at home for 7 days because of menstruation? Is it not a huge loss to her education? If they go to school they will be intelligent.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

These examples show how a large proportion of girls in India, Bangladesh and Nepal along with some of those in Bhutan face temporary exclusion during menstruation because of inadequate sanitation facilities. As has been mentioned in the Introduction, the CREATE Policy Briefing (CREATE, 2008) shows how temporary exclusion and low attendance can easily lead to low achievement and in some instances to permanent drop-out. At a time when girls' enrolment numbers are beginning to rise across South Asia it is disturbing to realize that so many adolescent girls are regularly missing school. The number of days missed varied from 3–4 to 7 days a month. Even taking the lower number, this still adds up to 30–40 days a year which, even if it does not lead to eventual drop-out, is certainly likely to have a

profound effect on girls' potential for success in school.

These instances of temporary exclusion reflect the findings in the literature study. However, while the literature study also contained several articles which spoke about discrimination against girls and women who were menstruating, this finding was not so universally apparent in the country research studies. It did certainly occur in India with one girl stating, 'If girls come to know that a particular girl is menstruating, they do not sit next to her', and others appearing to support this statement, although the report states that girls themselves did not appear always to recognize this as discrimination because 'it happens to all of us'. The Indian report also speaks about how traditionally the burning of used sanitary pads or cloths is carried out by a post-menopausal woman and suggests that this might be a reason why the few incinerators which exist are seldom or never used by menstruating girls. In other country reports, although they mention 'teasing' of menstruating girls by some boys, the issue of cultural taboo around menstruation is not raised.

It was, however, apparent in all reports that menstruation was seen as a very private issue and girls were deeply embarrassed at the way in which lack of proper facilities in school drew attention to the fact that they were menstruating. In Kapilvastu in Nepal, girls said they did not use the facilities partly because they were filthy but also because they felt uncomfortable fetching water in front of everyone and entering the toilet.

In Bangladesh, mothers of adolescent girls said that:

*They never talk to us about their menstruation and we also never ask them to avoid what might be embarrassing for them and for us as well.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

and:

*We do not even know how the girls manage themselves during menstruation at schools.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

Teachers appeared to collude in this sense of secrecy and in absenteeism, as one teacher said:

*I am not aware about menstruation. There is no toilet facility in the school and I would rather suggest that girls not come to school for a few days during menstruation.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

Although menstruation is a topic in the Bangladesh curriculum teachers chose to miss it out. A male teacher said:

*We never talk to the girl students regarding this issue. We being male feel uncomfortable in discussing this issue as it is a female 'problem'. We do not teach them the menstruation related chapter either. Female teachers might discuss about menstruation issues with girls.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

However, it seems that the female teachers too leave out this chapter:

*We study Home Economics and the boys study Science in the same class conducted by the same female teacher. She never teaches the chapter that includes 'Personal Care and Hygiene of Adolescent Girls during Menstruation'. She teaches an alternative chapter instead of that one. The alternative chapter is actually excluded from the school syllabus and no questions are asked from that particular chapter in school examinations.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

A few examples of good practice for menstruating girls were found during the studies. One of the secondary schools in Tanahu district of Nepal had a system whereby the Child Club collected money in order to provide a supply of sanitary pads within the school. This school also had a separate room where girls could wash and dry cloths or clothes. Girls said they were very happy with these facilities

and also reported that teachers or older girl students gave guidance to younger girls about how to manage their periods, thus suggesting that when sufficient facilities are provided this helps to create an environment where girls can support each other and share issues regarding menstruation.

Another interesting good practice response to helping both young people and their parents to discuss menstruation more openly appeared in the Bhutan report. The Department of Youth and Sports in Bhutan has instigated a School-based Parents Education and Awareness Initiative with the main objective of raising parents' awareness on issues and problems facing today's adolescents and youth. The programme deals with issues such as substance abuse, relationships and physical and psychological changes of young people. In a 2007 review parents spoke very positively about what they had gained from the programme with only 2 per cent stating that they had felt discomfort on the topics pertaining to body changes and reproductive health. Individual comments from parents who attended the course included:

*Most parents are not aware of communication gap with their children. It will help to bridge the information gap between parents and children. Just like me, the eyes of other parents can also be opened.*  
(Bhutan Report)

and:

*I am a father of many children who had no idea of menstrual cycle and other reproductive issues. It helped me a lot.*  
(Bhutan Report)

Bhutan was also unique in the four countries in appointing non-teaching health coordinators in schools, one of whose roles is to discuss health issues with students. The report notes that potentially this person could be a useful source of advice and support for menstruating girls. However, currently most health coordinators are male and one of the Bhutan recommendations is to raise the number of both female teachers and female health coordinators.

## 4.2 Children who have Communicable Diseases

The most common communicable diseases mentioned by teachers and students in all four countries were diarrhoea, red eye (conjunctivitis), scabies, colds and chicken pox. In some instances teachers advised children with these diseases to stay away from school for a few days, although in many instances the diseases appeared to be a part and parcel of everyday life and children attended school when they had them. In India, there were examples of children with scabies being asked to sit separately because of fear of the infection spreading. One group of boys in India also reported that exclusion based on communicable diseases was prevalent in schools, but it was unclear how much this was an issue of discrimination and how much in order to stop diseases spreading. In schools in Bangladesh and Bhutan, children with illnesses appeared to mix freely with other children. Children showed an awareness of the diseases and knew they were infectious but there was no evidence of discrimination against these students. Although the children were aware that these illnesses were infectious it was only in good practice schools in Mirzapur in India and Tanahu in Nepal that children made a clear link between good hygiene practices and the avoidance of infection. In Tanahu, children spoke about how instances of diarrhoea had gone down because of cleaner water and more hygienic practices.

In terms of more serious but less readily communicable diseases such as TB, leprosy and AIDS most children said that their knowledge of these illnesses had come mostly from poster and television awareness programmes. Bangladesh had one instance of a boy who had had TB. He had been absent from school for a month but appeared to have reintegrated without any difficulties on his return. Children in the study did not express any stigmatizing of people with TB, AIDS or leprosy except for one instance in Bhutan where older male students at one school said that they hesitate to go near a person affected by tuberculosis. They also mentioned that they feel uneasy to go to or walk past the tuberculosis and leprosy hospital at Gidakom.

Also in Bhutan, one boy reported that TB could be caught by eating too many sweets. In Bangladesh, children said that teachers missed out teaching

the section on TB and AIDS, as they had with the section on menstruation.

In general the messages coming through in relation to communicable diseases appear fairly positive in so far as children did not seem to discriminate against infected children. However, it was only in the schools with best practice that children clearly seemed to be aware of the link between catching a disease and good hygiene practices.

There were positive messages in that many children were aware of the information given in posters and on television about TB and AIDS. The example of the boy who had had TB but was easily integrated back into school also shows positive understanding and non-discrimination. However, it is concerning that teachers in Bangladesh chose not to teach the curriculum section on TB and AIDS and the older boys at one school in Bhutan obviously still had some feelings of an unwarranted fear about the contagiousness of TB and leprosy. As none of the schools' studies were carried out in urban areas where AIDS was highly prevalent, it is hard to draw any definitive conclusions about AIDS-related discrimination, although recent newspaper reports in Nepal of HIV-positive children being excluded from school show that this certainly can be an issue. TB, however, is known to be a major illness throughout South Asia. The fact that by far the majority of children did not mention any discriminatory attitudes towards people with TB could be that they genuinely did not have any negative attitudes towards people with TB or could be that people who have TB still keep this fact very hidden, as was apparent in findings of the literature study. In general, in contrast to articles cited in the literature study which mainly described the views of adults, the majority of children interviewed in this study appeared not to hold discriminatory views towards those with AIDS, TB or leprosy.

## 4.3 Children Perceived as Unclean

In using the term 'children perceived as unclean' the term Dalit was deliberately avoided. The intention was to observe whether all countries (two of which are predominantly Hindu, one Muslim and one Buddhist) had situations where certain groups

of children were treated differently in relation to issues related to water and sanitation. Throughout the study it was emphasized that it was important to move away from automatic presumptions that discrimination based on perceived uncleanliness can only be related to caste and instead to look at the behaviour and attitudes of teachers and students in issues such as sharing of meals, accepting water, duties to clean toilets, seating patterns, etc. When this approach was taken it became clear that to some extent all countries had examples of behaviour which discriminated against certain groups in these domains. This subsection looks at the way in which notions of uncleanliness played themselves out in schools in the four countries and then synthesizes some of these findings.

### India

The two districts in India, Mirzapur and Lalitpur, both have a high percentage of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Muslim and Other Backward Classes. However, there are also differences between them. In Mirzapur many better off families have migrated or send their children to private schools hence the district is less heterogeneous than Lalitpur and it is likely that this demographic difference had some affect on research findings. Mirzapur has also been the recipient of a government total sanitation programme. While there have been civil rights and pro-Dalit movements throughout Uttar Pradesh, Lalitpur is generally perceived to be more traditional than Mirzapur. These differences tended to be borne out in the research study.

In all schools researchers watched children eating their midday meal. In Mirzapur there was far less overt discrimination. The researchers did observe some children refusing their midday meal but the reasons given for this were that they did not like the food and there was no explicit mention of caste. However, this lack of caste-based discrimination was not the case in Lalitpur. Here some children brought water for themselves and their teachers from a pump outside as the school pump was used by Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children. There was also an example of parents of forward caste children saying that they did not want all children to draw water from the same water pot. At one school Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children were seen ‘huddled together’

separately during mealtime. In Lalitpur, too, researchers noted several examples of discrimination in terms of classroom seating, for example in the fact that Sahariya (a semi-nomadic and traditionally ostracized Scheduled Tribe) children were ‘made to sit separately or behind in the classrooms’ and how this physical separation was also reflected in teachers’ attitude towards the children’s ability with some teachers considering them as academically poor and not as bright as forward caste children.

In terms of cleaning duties the India report notes that in one good practice school in Mirzapur there was no gender/caste based segregation in the allocation of cleaning duties. However, in other schools, particularly in Lalitpur, the report states that inclusion and exclusion plays itself out in the nature of duties assigned to children. While all children may participate in pouring (or actually throwing) water from a distance and in sweeping the classroom and picking up litter, we are told that ‘children from better off families are exempt from cleaning of toilets with a broom and brush’. The India report also mentions a teacher saying that children from families perceived to be influential and powerful are not asked to clean the toilets. This discrimination and favouritism inevitably includes discrimination against children from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, although interestingly the researchers point out that wealth too, regardless of caste, can be a significant factor.

Discrimination in Lalitpur was shown to be particularly played out by teachers. Teachers from upper castes ‘made no attempt to break caste barriers amongst themselves or with the children’. They did not accept food from the lower caste cooks and some of them did not accept water from lower caste children. Their attitudes towards children – Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Muslim – showed both acute discriminatory attitudes towards those who they perceived as being from ‘unclean’ groups and also portrayed derogatory generalizations about the ability of people from these other groups:

- ▶ *Sahariya children are dirty and dull, they do not like coming to school.*
- ▶ *They send children to school only*

*for scholarships and uniforms; the parents are irresponsible. Even the intelligent children are not encouraged.*

- ▶ *Girls are more confident and conscious about cleanliness, sanitation, and also about their studies.*
- ▶ *The Muslim system is different from ours - we cannot accept water from Muslims as they are non-vegetarians. We have no problem in taking water from Hindu Dalits even if they are non-vegetarians, because their hands are pure as they served water to Lord Rama.*
- ▶ *Children who are good in studies are also sincere about cleaning duties. But those from Dalit families are not sincere about studies and they object to cleaning duties. We do not ask the children from powerful families (i.e. those with political influence in the village) to clean toilets as we do not want to get into trouble.*
- ▶ *In one school the assistant teacher referred to the headteacher saying that he was a great man; he set the example by cleaning the toilets himself, adding 'But I will never do it because this act will pollute my caste status.'*

*(India Report)*

Children, however, showed a more complex and changing perception of caste and ethnic based discrimination. They recognized that traditional ideas are being challenged especially at school, at work, in movies and other social events (although interestingly the researchers note that caste divisions tend to be reinforced at election times with politicians seeking to mobilize votes on the basis of caste). Some children did express traditional prejudices:

*We have to wash after the children from families of fishermen use the hand pump as otherwise we will incur the wrath of goddess Durga.*  
*(India Report)*

*In our school, the water is stored in a separate bucket for the use of girls from one community. They are very dirty and we do not allow them to use the hand pump.*  
*(India Report)*

and several of the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe children did talk about their upper caste friends not wanting to share food with them or washing the pump after they had used it. However, another group of adolescent boys spoke about how friendship was important to them and how they would not hesitate to eat and sit with friends from other groups. This same group, however, was also conscious of the potential of conflict within the village and said that they would prefer not to challenge caste-based discrimination in a public forum. Several of the children showed a clear distinction between the sort of behaviour they could carry out with friends at school and what they could do at home; as one group of upper primary children said, 'everything goes in friendship, we just do not talk about it at home'.

One other finding that emerged in India was that caste and ethnicity were not the only factors that determined discrimination. Children who were from very poor families were also discriminated against even if they did not come from a particular caste or ethnic group: 'Almost all the teachers differentiated between the relatively better-off (including Dalits and other socially deprived groups) and those who are very poor.' Preferential treatment also appears to be given to children who are good at their studies and the report speaks of girls who are neatly turned out, clever and from good families being exempt from cleaning toilets. Conversely those not so good at studies had to carry out more cleaning.

Children themselves were very aware of these shifting dynamics of power and spoke about how:

*People who have power discriminate against those who are powerless. Power comes with money, caste, religion, government/police jobs, and the most important is political power.*  
*(India Report)*

## Nepal

The research in Nepal provides an interesting contrast to that in India. Although Nepal is also a predominantly Hindu country, researchers found no evidence of caste-based discrimination in the schools they visited. Where they were available, all students irrespective of caste had equal access to drinking water facilities. In terms of the assignment of duties in the example from Tanahu all children participated equally in cleaning duties. In other schools it appears that the issue is not so much about discrimination in allocating duties but rather that little cleaning at all appears to take place. There was an indication that caste-based discrimination could still exist at home with families not eating together with those from an untouchable caste, but not in public places such as schools. This is particularly surprising considering that the literature study showed considerable anecdotal and some written evidence of caste-based discrimination in schools. Barr *et al.* (2007) discussing Dalits in India and Nepal reveal that there is still considerable exclusion of Dalit children from school. However, they show that there are marked differences between the school attendance of Terai and hill Dalits with the national average for people 6 years and above who had never attended school being 76 per cent for Terai Dalits and 43 per cent for hill Dalits (p.10). The same research also shows that the proportion of Dalits amongst primary students has been increasing since 2004. The selection of sites in Nepal was made in conjunction with UNICEF staff and government officials. It was agreed that caste-based discrimination might not be apparent in Tanahu and Chitwan districts. However, Kapilvastu district (which is in the Terai) was specifically selected because it was felt that traditional caste distinctions were likely to exist there.

The research did show that appearing clean and tidy at school was seen as very important in Nepal:

*All the schools visited gave priority to the external appearance of the students ... peers, and in some cases teachers, checked whether students had clipped their nails, combed their hair properly and were in clean outfits.*  
(Nepal Report)

Children who did not meet these standards could be told to take a bath. In Chitwan some children, some but not all of whom were from the Chepang community, were regarded by teachers as being 'unclean' and coming to school looking dirty and unkempt. This appeared to be linked in teachers' minds with them coming from families which often had one parent away as a migrant labourer. These children often sat at the back of the class and there also appeared to be some indication that they were regarded by teachers as less able to benefit from their studies. The report states that poverty appears to be a key factor in discrimination:

*Viewed from other dimensions, poverty was found to be a decisive factor in discrimination ... children who came from poor families and could not afford to keep their appearance clean were not accepted irrespective of their social standing.*  
(Nepal Report)

## Bangladesh

The Bangladesh report shows how issues of marginalization present themselves in different ways, although it also shows how poverty is a key factor in determining less favourable treatment. The research points out that children from the sweeper community were not at school at all, although there was a sweeper community near one of the schools, thus suggesting that, for whatever reason, these children are excluded from school.

Two groups in Bangladesh appeared to experience some marginalization both by teachers and at times by other students. These were Hindu Adivasi children and children from the tea gardens. In both instances these children were minorities in their school. Also in both instances they were children whose families tended to be very poor.

Although there was not substantive evidence to show that these groups of children were specifically regarded as 'unclean' there were ways in which other peoples' behaviour towards them marked them out as being less respected. While in some schools, particularly primary schools, duties appear to be equally shared in others we are told that 'some Adivasi boys were frequently

asked to “throw water on the toilets”.<sup>7</sup> In one instance in Noagaon an Adivasi father spoke vehemently about the way in which his two children had been made to clean the toilets, adding that:

*I told my other community members of the incidence, but nobody wanted to raise their voice against such discrimination, everyone wants to compromise with the Bengalis.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

It was also reported that none of the Adivasi girls were asked to collect water for Muslim teachers for ozu (to clean them before prayer). Observation showed that in secondary schools, while Adivasi boys tended to sit with and play with Bengali boys, Adivasi girls tended to sit together in a group and, as has been noted in an earlier section, Adivasi girls did not get invited back to Muslim girls’ homes when they needed to change sanitary cloths. However, there were also indications to show that discrimination against Adivasis was becoming less strong. Teachers and girls spoke about how Adivasi people now generally had access to a common well, which used not to be the case, and there were two instances of Adivasi boys beginning to visit Bengali friends’ houses.

The other group of children who faced some discrimination in the schools visited in Bangladesh were children from tea gardens. These children are both Hindu and also usually very poor. Interestingly, Muslim members of the community took pains to explain that their isolation was because they kept themselves away from others and that this was because they are poor, but not because of low caste. The tea-garden girls too spoke of how ‘other students treat us as poor but not as low caste’. Children from the tea gardens said that other boys in the class made them sit at the back of the room. In Moulovibazar, tea-garden children were heard of being called ‘bagani’ (‘from the garden’) and although teachers and SMC members denied that this word had negative connotations it was clear from another interview with a teacher that it did have. The tea-garden children themselves referred to the Muslims as the ‘rich’ children and said how when they were not able to bring lunch from home the ‘rich children would smile at them’.

As was mentioned earlier, in one of the Bangladesh schools the one drinking glass was kept locked away. Girls from the tea gardens said that:

*If we ask for the glass, the guard says, “You will crack the glasses” and he does not give us the glass. But he gives it to other ‘Bengali’ and Monipuri girls and boys as they are rich. After that we never ask for the glass. Rather we drink water with our hands.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

The headteacher justified this by saying that the tea-garden children liked to use their hands: ‘... people in rural areas are used to using hands to drink water directly from the tube-well.’ Parents said that tea-garden children would not want to use the same glass as that used by a Muslim. However, what the girls had said was that they did want to use the glass but were not allowed to.

### **Bhutan**

Research in Bhutan showed that in all schools visited, cleanliness was seen as being extremely important. Teachers said they felt that children staying clean affected both their health and their learning. Children in all schools are inspected once or twice a week to ensure that their clothes, nails and hair are clean. This inevitably mitigates against children from very poor families or children who live far away who are unable to keep to this level of cleanliness. While one teacher did show an understanding that cleanliness was not necessarily associated with coming from a good or wealthy family, there seemed to be a general perception that cleanliness represented quality and also that certain groups would always come dirty to school. These groups varied from district to district – in the west it was the children of the urban poor and labourers, in the south it was the Uraon children (an Adivasi group of Indian origin) and in the east it was farmer’s children. In all cases these were children of the poorest families.

While these children did not appear to be discriminated against by having to disproportionately perform tasks such as cleaning of toilets they could sometimes be seen sitting separately from other children. There were also

suggestions that some teachers made assumptions that these children's families were not so concerned about education. In some schools children's state of cleanliness makes a difference to their academic mark sheets, showing a clear equation between cleanliness and ability, and one of the Bhutan recommendations is that this practice should be stopped.

### Synthesis

The findings from all four countries show that notions of cleanliness and the perception that certain children are unclean does appear to hold considerable power. The ways in which the children were discriminated against varied, but whether it was by having to clean toilets, not eating with others, not being asked to fetch water, or simply by it being assumed they will sit separately, certain children in all countries were seen to face some discrimination. There was also an assumption, sometimes overtly expressed as in Lalitpur and at other times much more subtly alluded to, that these children were somehow less able, less intelligent and less committed to their studies.

Reasons for this discrimination varied both between and within countries. Some children are discriminated against on the basis of caste, others on ethnicity and, in all countries, a major reason for discrimination appears to be poverty. The children in India were clearly able to recognize the shifting context within which discrimination takes place and to understand how traditional divisions on the basis of religion and caste were also giving way to more class-based distinctions based on wealth and political power. There is a clear message here that to make assumptions and neat generalizations about who will be discriminated against is not necessarily effective. The issue is both complex and constantly changing. Not all Dalits in the schools visited in India faced discrimination; in Nepali schools, Dalits were not the most affected group; in Bangladesh, Adivasi children faced discrimination but the richer Manipuri did not. The context of discrimination varies both from place to place and over time, hence the focus of inclusion has to be on the creation of an inclusive school rather than simply on the excluded groups.

One of the positive aspects of the findings is the perception that traditional exclusionary practices

are beginning to change. There were both acknowledgements of this and also distinctions between the attitudes of children and those of adults. Some of the worst examples of discrimination came from teachers in Lalitpur. On the one hand this is extremely worrying in terms of the negative role model it gives to children. However, the more positive side is that several children in India exhibited less rigid views. Many of the children were very aware of the changing context in which they were living and, although they did not always have the confidence to express their views openly with the older generation, they did also express a belief that things could be different. The children's views and some of those of adults also revealed that manifestations of discrimination might continue to exist in the private place of home but was beginning to break down in a more public arena such as school.

## 4.4 Favouritism and the Emergence of New Elites

One interesting finding was the way in which certain groups of children seemed to gain a favoured position in the classroom which was not necessarily related to their caste or ethnicity. The India report talks about preferential treatment given to children who are 'good at their studies' and also speaks of girls who are neatly turned out, clever, wealthy and from good families being exempt from cleaning toilets. Conversely, those not so good at studies had to carry out more cleaning. The report specifically points out that children who come from wealthier families may also include children from traditionally excluded groups: 'almost all the teachers differentiated between the relatively better off (including Dalits and other socially deprived groups) and those who are very poor.' In Bhutan, the report notes that 'teachers seemed to favour the better dressed, clean, bright, and well behaved students.' In Bangladesh, girls who were asked to fetch water appeared to be those who are 'brightest, well dressed, clean, tidy and smarter'. In Bangladesh, too, there did in general appear to be discrimination against children who were from poorer families although teachers from all schools claimed that there was no economic discrimination. In one school in Comilla the School Management Committee members admitted that children from rich families never do the 'dirty' jobs like cleaning the toilet because they are never

asked. In a school in Moulvibazar, although members of the School Management Committee had said that children cleaned the classroom on a strictly rotational basis, the children themselves denied this, saying:

*We clean classrooms in a group by rotation, but there are three girls. Two, whose parents are government official and NGO worker, are rich. Another girl from Monipuri community whose parents are doing business is also rich. All three are friends. They never clean the classroom. Initially we asked them to clean the classrooms when it was their turn. But they never clean or respond to us when we ask them. Teachers also asked them, but very softly, to clean but still they do not. Now neither teachers nor we ask them to clean classrooms any more. If someone does not respond to you what is the point of asking them? (Bangladesh Report)*

In the Indian report a teacher is quoted as saying:

*We do not ask the children from powerful families (i.e. those with political influence in the village) to clean toilets as we do not want to get into trouble. (India Report)*

These descriptions indicate the emergence of a newer elite based on wealth, ability, success and family influence rather than on traditional values of religion and caste. All countries in South Asia are currently undergoing considerable change. Most families now are far more aware of what happens in cities. They have relations who have migrated either to urban areas or to other countries in their search for work. In such a situation it is inevitable that old patterns of social order will begin to break down and new ones emerge. Two points are interesting here in relation to water and sanitation. The first is that these new elites often manifest their position through their appearance and in particular by being clean and well dressed. The second is the way in which the new elites take

on the same privileges as the old ones in terms of not having to carry out cleaning duties.

## 4.5 Children with Disabilities

Researchers were not asked specifically to study students with disabilities but they did comment on them when they were present in the classes visited. In all reports it was noted, as already stated in Chapter Three, that toilet facilities were not adapted for students with physical disabilities:

*Despite well-articulated guidelines/design specifications for CWSN, friendly water and sanitation facilities under SSHE, none of the toilets had railings or stools for Indian style toilets. While a few toilets had ramps, they were either broken or the surface was too uneven for unhindered mobility. In some cases, if the toilet was at surface level, either the access to the toilet was difficult or the internal design was not CWSN friendly. Clearly, these children were unable to use the facilities. In case they had to use the toilet they were either sent home with someone or their parents were called to carry them home. (India Report)*

There were some reported instances in India of overt and very negative discrimination. In one school the particular needs of a deaf child had not been identified; in another a slow learner was referred to as 'stupid and useless'; and in a third teachers insisted the research team should meet a mentally challenged girl student 'for fun'. However, in the same school classmates were shown to be treating a girl with physical disabilities just like anyone else in the group. In other countries the general attitude towards disabled children who were attending school appeared far more positive. In Bangladesh, teachers and children were shown to help children with disabilities and in Bhutan there were reports of teachers and children supporting a disabled child and also children who had health problems. However, the numbers of disabled children reported in schools was very small. It is

likely that the children in school represented those whose families were particularly committed to their education and that many other disabled children were not attending school.

## 4.6 Summary of Findings

The four country studies did not point to conclusive evidence that children are being permanently excluded from school solely on the basis of issues related to water and sanitation. In India we are told that adolescent boys and girls who had dropped out for reasons such as needing to work, getting married or failing exams:

*... laughed out loud when asked about sanitation and water and its impact on attendance or dropping out. Not a single adolescent girl said that they dropped out because of lack of toilet facilities, and when probed on exclusion they said: 'the toilets are dirty for everyone.'*  
(India Report)

However, the findings do provide very clear evidence to show that a high proportion of menstruating girls face temporary exclusion each month because of a lack of privacy and the absence of any place where they can either wash sanitary cloths or dispose of pads. It appeared that girls had not been consulted about the kind of facilities they required although they often had very clear ideas about what was needed. Girls themselves and their mothers were aware of the way in which these regular absences meant that they missed out on considerable areas of schoolwork which certainly had the effect of lowering their potential for achievement and could in the longer term be a contributory factor in eventual drop-out.

While there was some evidence from India of active discrimination against girls who were menstruating, with other girls saying they would not sit next to them while they had their periods, in general the girls' concerns appeared not to be related to cultural stigma. Instead what they required was adequate facilities which would allow them to manage their menstruation with dignity, and also practical information about menstruation.

In general, menstruation seemed to be regarded by teachers as the problem of the individual girl with little attempt, except at one or two schools, either to try to adapt facilities for them or to provide support. In Bangladesh, where menstruation is a subject on the curriculum, this section is regularly omitted even by women teachers. This points to the need not only for more women teachers but also for more attention to this area in teacher training.

In terms of discrimination the studies showed that children appearing clean was very important in schools in all four countries. In all countries there were examples of children who were less favourably looked upon because of a perceived or actual lack of cleanliness. A clear message coming through from the study was that one could not make neat generalizations about which specific groups of children would automatically face discrimination because they were perceived as 'unclean'. In some schools in India cleanliness was seen to be closely associated with caste although this did not appear to be the case in Nepal. In other countries some children from some ethnic minorities appeared to be perceived less favourably than other children. In all countries an overriding factor appeared to be poverty.

Ways in which children were discriminated against varied but included being asked to clean the toilets when other children were exempt from this duty, not being given privileges such as fetching water for the teacher or simply by being expected to sit in their own group at the back of the class. One of the most worrying findings was that these children were often assumed by teachers to be both less able and also less committed to their studies. These are the very children who potentially could gain so much from education with it providing them with a possible path out of poverty. However, the negative assumptions made about their ability to learn are inevitably likely to place them at a disadvantage in the classroom and result in them being less likely to do well in their studies.

There were indications in all countries of a shifting context with traditional divisions of caste and ethnicity still existing but also beginning to give way to newer, more class-based distinctions defined by wealth, success, ability and family influence. Children of these new elites tended to

be those who were clean, well dressed and good at their studies and were often the ones favoured by teachers and also the ones who were exempt from tasks such as cleaning.

One clear and positive message was that many children themselves were very aware that the context of discrimination was beginning to change, with several of them stating that they felt happy at school eating and sitting with friends from a wide variety of different backgrounds although they would feel less confident in sharing these practices at home.

Discrimination against people with everyday communicative diseases such as red eye or scabies was not very apparent in the schools' studies, although the India report did talk of certain children being stigmatized because of their illness. Most children seemed to be aware of TB and AIDS through television programmes or poster campaigns. Apart from some slight indications of

discriminatory feelings against people with TB in Bhutan, in general children did not appear to show discrimination towards people with TB or AIDS. However, none of the schools visited contained any children with HIV/AIDS and it could have been that instances of TB in the communities might have been hidden.

Children with disabilities were present in some of the schools in all countries. All researchers spoke about the way in which sanitation facilities were not suitable for children with physical disabilities. There were a few examples in Indian schools of disabled children being treated very negatively but in other schools in all countries disabled children appeared to be experiencing positive social integration. However, the number of disabled children in school was very small and the probability is that many disabled children were excluded from school completely.

All of the research teams were asked to report on examples of good practice in their selected schools. Despite the difficulties reported in the previous chapters many very positive examples of good practice were recorded. This chapter

begins with giving two examples of good practice seen in Tanahu in Nepal and one in Mirzapur in India and then goes on to draw out the key themes which are needed to inform good practice. Further examples of good practice are given in Annex 2.

## 5.1 Examples of Good Practice

Khairenitar Secondary School, Khairenitar 8, Tanahu district, has six drinking water taps. In addition, the school has two urinals and two toilets for girls, and two urinals and two toilets for boys. Urinals could be used by six people at a time. Toilets were equipped with running water, bucket, jug, soap, etc. A tap was installed outside each urinal. A tank which could hold one thousand litres of water was installed in the school.

Different agencies have supported SLTS in this school. Children and teachers were taken for an exposure visit to India by UNICEF. A child club with 40 members from grades six to ten was formed. One teacher trained in SLTS was assigned to supervise and support the child club. Child club members were also provided with training on SLTS. The 40 members provided orientation about SLTS to other students. Donations were collected from students to buy a broom, dustbin and other items necessary for cleaning. The major function of the club was to maintain cleanliness in the school by cleaning the school compound, classrooms, and water and sanitation facilities in the school. Subgroups were formed and responsibility was allocated to them. A monthly schedule was prepared showing the tasks allocated to each subgroup. Since all the students were scheduled to take the responsibility and if they showed resentment they were penalized, there was no room for exclusion on the basis of social group or gender.

The club also organized cleaning campaigns in their respective communities or settlements once a month. The teachers participated fully in the campaigns organized by the students, which boosted the students' confidence and enthusiasm. Students persuaded families to construct toilets in their respective households. Each household now has a toilet and every member of the household cleans the toilet. The school catchment area, which was Khairenitar VDC, has a cleaning committee as part of CLTS which required one member of each household to participate in the cleaning campaigns organized periodically. Absent households are fined. Money collected from the fines is used for buying brushes, brooms and other cleaning items.

The second example is from a primary school also in Tanahu.

Tribhuvan Primary School, located in Bandipur VDC Ward No. 7, has two urinals and two toilets for girls and the same number of urinals and toilets for boys. Teachers also use the same toilets. Toilets were equipped with running water, bucket, jug, brush, etc. Five drinking water taps were installed. Soap and towel were also available for students' use. A water tank with a capacity of 500 litres was installed. Water was supplied by Bandipur Drinking Water Committee. If the system broke down, the committee provided a repair service soon after being informed. Several governmental and non-governmental agencies have provided the facilities.

The school has formed a 13-member Junior Red Cross. The school has different groups named after famous peaks of Nepal. The leader of each group is responsible for ensuring that students from his/her respective group are neat and tidy. Cleaning of the school premises, including toilets, was led by the Junior Red Cross committee supported by the teachers. Students from Grades 1 and 2 were excused from cleaning.

Under the school's leadership as part of CLTS, two sanitation committees, consisting of 15 members each, were formed in the catchment area. These committees organized a community cleaning programme twice a month. All households within the school catchment area had toilets. Different agencies have supported the CLTS drive. Both the students and the community sanitation committees ensured that no one would defecate in open spaces.

Only two families from the Dalit community resided in the school's catchment area. According to a Dalit father whose child was in Tribhuvan Primary School, there was no discrimination at household and school. He informed that untouchability was not practised in the school's catchment area.

In India an example of good practice was observed in one of the villages in Mirzapur where the pradhan, a lady, is represented by her husband, who plays an active role in village governance with special commitment to sanitation and village development.

A tour of the village presents an overall positive picture: closed drains, well-used garbage bins, hand pumps with platforms and proper drainage for waste water, enclosed bathing shelters for women, public urinals for men, and clean, litter-free village roads.

The small but well contained primary school is located on the main road, across which was located the upper primary school. At the primary school, the toilets for both boys and girls were child friendly in design, including those for the 3-5 year old Anganwadi children. However, accessibility to them for children with disabilities was a problem.

The school toilet was clean and appeared well used. There was sweeper who came in weekly, but children maintained the cleanliness over the week. The toilet usage and cleaning habits of children were also evident in their homes, as witnessed during the village visit.

The water facility was via a force lift hand pump which supplied clean potable water to washbasins which had taps for hand washing. As an alternative, a submersible pump was linked to the hand pump, which children knew how to operate to fill up the tank; children, both boys and girls, were checking the overhead tank to see it was full. The drain from the hand pump platform was linked to the covered drain of the village.

A garbage bin was located at the rear end of the school – the children dumped their daily litter in it, and this was cleaned by the sweeper once a week.

The handwashing practices after toilet use, and before/after meals, and even after cleaning up the campus, were observed. These practices have been transferred by the children to their families, as they have educated their siblings and parents, and often do the cleaning themselves too.

They have a committee to organize the MDM, seating arrangements during the meals, and cleaning up after the meal. No gender/caste-based segregation is visible in classroom practices; nor between haves and have-nots since all homes had toilets and were using them.

Children are aware of scabies, and segregated those children who appeared to be affected by this disease. They are aware about various sources of potable water, difference between clean and dirty water, harmful effects of using dirty water, benefits of using toilets, etc.

## 5.2 Key Themes to Inform Good Practice

Features which these examples share include:

- ▶ Sufficient and well maintained facilities
- ▶ Clearly worked out systems of cleaning
- ▶ A positive relationship between school and community so that good practice in one is reinforced by good practice in the other
- ▶ Children who are aware of the importance of good hygiene practices
- ▶ A strong ethos of inclusion.

### 5.2.1 Sufficient and well maintained facilities

It is hard to create good practice without sufficient, well designed facilities. In Tanahu district in Nepal:

*Khairenitar Secondary School ... has six drinking water taps. In addition, the school has two urinals and two toilets for girls, and two urinals and two toilets for boys. Urinals could be used by six people at a time ... A tap was installed outside each urinal.*

while in the good practice example in Mirzapur in India:

*... the toilets for both boys and girls were child friendly in design, including those for the 3–5 year old Anganwadi children.*

Schools had efficient systems in place for maintenance and repair. For example in the school in Bandipur in Tanahu, water was supplied by Bandipur Drinking Water Committee. If the system broke down, the committee provided a repair service soon after being informed. Attention was given not just to structural drinking and toilet facilities but also to essential equipment. For example, in Tanahu toilets were equipped with running water, bucket, jug, soap, etc., and in the schools in Mirzapur in India and in Bhutan bins were provided for litter.

### 5.2.2 Clearly worked out systems for cleaning

The schools described above had developed different ways in which responsibility for cleaning toilets was ensured. The India report shows the value of having one individual who takes a key leadership role: the lady pradhan, represented by her husband 'who plays an active role in village governance with special commitment to sanitation and village development'. Children in the schools all join in cleaning duties but the pradhan had arranged for a weekly sweeper to carry out some of the tasks. In Tanahu in Nepal it is the children themselves who have the responsibility to ensure that facilities are cleaned either by members of the Child Club or members of the Junior Red Cross.

In Bhutan, a different arrangement was in place with the appointment of school health coordinators. These staff are not academic teachers but are people who have been trained in first aid, counselling and health and hygiene issues. As well

as initiating school health and hygiene activities and instigating programmes such as de-worming and the distribution of Vitamin A tablets, these coordinators have also established school clubs. In some cases these clubs have coordinated the stockpiling of sanitary napkins for menstruating girls. In another they have initiated compulsory activities for students from classes 3–6 for 45 minutes every day after school. We are told:

*The group on Health and Hygiene worked on promoting and ensuring cleanliness of the school campus. In order to share the responsibility and accountability among the group members, they divided the school campus into six zones, assigning a sub-group with a captain to supervise a zone. The activities that this group undertook comprised:*

- ▶ *management of wastes such as paper, plastics, bottles, etc.*
- ▶ *maintaining cleanliness of the toilets*
- ▶ *setting examples to the rest of the students on hygiene practices.*

*The group framed rules that disallowed both students and teachers from bringing plastics and bottles to the school. They also introduced separate disposal pits and bins to segregate the wastes. The teachers assigned and the group members were required to pick up waste deliberately in front of the smaller students and throw it into their designated pits or bins to set examples.*  
(Bhutan Report)

The different zones carried out a competition and there was strong rivalry to see who could create the cleanest environment.

While these examples all show different ways of instilling responsibility, the common shared feature was that all children felt a sense of ownership of their facilities and environment and took a pride in

ensuring that they were clean and well looked after. The Nepal report, describing the children in Tanahu, said:

*The students from this district were proud that they were the change agents not only in school but also in the community since they were leading the cleaning campaigns in the schools and the community under the SLTS programme.*  
(Nepal Report)

The precise way in which facilities are cleaned also varies. For example, in Tanahu all the work is the responsibility of children while in Mirzapur they are supported by the employment of a sweeper. However, an important shared factor is the part played by teachers and the relationship between teachers and children in carrying out duties. In the examples of good practice we are shown that responsibility for keeping facilities clean was a shared task and not simply something which children were instructed to do. In Tanahu, teachers are shown to actively support the children's work: 'The teachers participated fully in the campaigns organized by the students, which boosted the students' confidence and enthusiasm', and mention is also made of the fact that teachers do not have separate toilets but share facilities with children hence have a vested interest in ensuring their cleanliness.

In another example in Mirzapur we are told about a retired headteacher who is described as having 'led from the front' by himself instigating cleaning practices and, when a group of adolescent drop-out boys who were interviewed who were initially very negative about the fact that children had to help clean toilets were reminded of this teacher, 'they confessed that as their old headteacher used to pick up the broom and start sweeping himself, the children had no option but to extend a helping hand to him.'

In Bangladesh, too, while there is not shown to be such a well worked out system of cleaning as those shown in other countries, the researchers noted that schools which had good practice were the ones where children stated that their teachers regularly participated in cleaning the school and toilets and researchers noted how this 'not only

inspires children but at the same time develops a mentality in them of doing their own work.’

### 5.2.3 Relationship between school and community

Another feature which comes across clearly in the good practice examples is the way in which good practice in schools is reinforced by corresponding good practice in the community. While there is certainly the potential for good practice in schools to be transferred to the community, and this will be explored in detail in the next chapter, the examples show how good practice in school is most likely to happen if schools are a part of a community-wide commitment to improve water and sanitation conditions. This comes across most clearly in Tanahu in Nepal and Mirzapur in India where in both cases schools were sited in communities which were part of a total sanitation campaign.

In Tanahu, good practice in schools is shown to be matched by good practice in the community. The Khairenitar school is in a catchment area which has ‘a cleaning committee as part of CLTS which required one member of each household to participate in the cleaning campaigns organized periodically. Absent households are fined. Money collected from the fines is used for buying brushes, brooms and other cleaning items.’ In Mirzapur we are shown how sanitation is a major agenda of the village.

We also learn that this situation is very different from that which was in place a few years earlier:

*However, a few years ago MS1 was different. There was no system for garbage disposal in the village, including there being no system for disposal of sanitary napkins/rags, which were buried in fields by girls and women. Even the primary and upper primary schools were not the same, both in terms of school infrastructure and practices three years ago. With no proper WATSAN facilities, both the schools were not properly maintained. Earlier, there was a clear discrimination in the seating arrangements between OBC and SC children in the school. Further,*

*monitoring of sanitary practices in the village was not as meticulous as it is today. (India Report)*

The researchers in India are very clear that the total sanitation programme, which covers Mirzapur district but not Lalitpur, has contributed towards changing social attitudes and practices. Where this community-wide good practice initiative does not exist the researchers feel that a school could be seen as a role model but ‘for the good practice to sustain over a long period and across different school heads, the community has to be appreciative of the good practice.’

### 5.2.4 Awareness of the importance of good hygiene practices

All good practice schools have examples which show that children not only carry out good health and hygiene practices but are also aware of the reasons for doing this. In Tanahu, children spoke of their understanding of the fact that instances of diarrhoea had reduced with better water and hygiene facilities and practice. In the example in Mirzapur, all the children are aware of various sources of potable water, the difference between clean and dirty water, harmful effects of using dirty water and the benefits of using toilets, etc.

Schools in Bhutan, as we have seen above, had a specially appointed health coordinator whose responsibilities included initiating school health activities including hygiene education to create awareness on health and hygiene such as handwashing. Other functions of the health coordinator, with the school health clubs, were to:

*... advise and check whether students come to school clean or not (regular check every Monday). They collaborate with the BHUs and hospitals in students’ de-worming programmes and in the distribution of iron supplement and vitamin A tablets. They also help sick students to visit the BHUs and hospitals and maintain a health log book for each student. Students also have an attendance log book to ensure school attendance. This attendance log book is checked*

*every day by class teachers and parents. The SHCs also facilitate school health check-ups which are done twice a year by doctors and physicians – including general health check-up, oral health programme and primary eye care. (Bhutan Report)*

Interestingly it is Bhutan, as shown in the section on menstruation in Chapter Four, which was also piloting a government School-based Parents Education and Awareness Programme in order to give parents the opportunity to learn more about health and social issues facing their adolescent children. These two programmes show an awareness in Bhutan that caring for health needs and raising awareness amongst children and parents of issues to do with health should form an integral part of a school's responsibility.

### 5.2.5 An ethos of inclusion

In all of the good practice examples we are shown how cleaning duties are carried out completely equitably with no discrimination or favouritism. In the Tanahu secondary school, 'all the students were scheduled to take responsibility and if they showed resentment they were penalized' hence 'there was no room for exclusion on the basis of social group or gender'. In the primary school, children from Grades 1 and 2 were exempt from cleaning duties but otherwise all children participated equally, a fact endorsed by the father of one of two Dalit families in the catchment area who said that there was no discrimination at household or school. In India, where the researchers observed participation in the midday meal the school had a children's committee to organize this, including seating arrangements, and no gender/caste based discrimination was visible either in the meal or in classroom practices.

The phrase in the Nepal report 'there was no room for exclusion' is interesting and relevant here. If tasks really are distributed equally and if seating arrangements are, as a matter of practice, non-discriminatory, a situation is created where discrimination in these areas does not have a place. However, many examples in the preceding chapter give examples which are far from equitable with certain children either singled out or exempt from cleaning duties and certain

children automatically sitting separately from others. We also saw how easily these children were also assumed by teachers to be less able and less committed than others. Often these discriminatory practices have been deeply internalized not only by teachers but also by children. In Lalitpur in India, we are told of lower caste children sitting 'huddled together' during the midday meal. In the Bangladesh report we are told how the Adivasi girls always sat on their own and the tea-garden children always sat at the back of the class. In the Bhutan report we are told that children from the Uraonis community are 'shy and mingled only amongst themselves'.

In both Bangladesh and Bhutan we are given examples of teachers trying to alter seating arrangements. A teacher in Bhutan speaking of the Uraonis says:

*Sometimes it is so difficult to make them mix around that one time I literally had to pull them one by one and make them sit next to other students. (Bhutan Report)*

while a girl student in Bangladesh speaking of the tea-garden girls says:

*Sometimes our teacher changes our sitting arrangement and makes sure that we sit by other students, but after the class is over, we again sit together in a group with our friends from the tea garden. (Bangladesh Report)*

Such individual examples show an attempt by individual teachers to change traditional practice. However, as is also shown, they do not on their own manage to fundamentally alter the situation. When such one-off attempts fail it is all too easy for teachers to feel they have tried but that the root cause of the problem lies in the children themselves and in their preference to sit apart.

The reality is that changing deeply internalized practices requires more than one-off attempts. If children experience a continual atmosphere of discrimination they will of course want to sit with

people from their own group amongst whom they feel safe and with whom they can identify. If they are always perceived as being less able than others they will in time internalize this perception and consequently begin to perform less well. Instead, it requires all teachers to be aware of which children might be excluded and the reasons for this and to respond with a whole-school commitment to create automatic inclusive practices. A recent study carried out by UNICEF ROSA on education in emergencies spoke about how inclusive schools needed to be ‘child-seeking’, ‘child-friendly’ and ‘child-enabling’ (CIER, 2009). Such a school needs to be based upon a vision which believes that all children, regardless of social or economic status, have the right not only to attend school but while there to be treated equally and to be given the support and skills they require to learn and succeed.

### 5.3 Summary of Findings on Good Practice

The examples of practice shown in this section reveal how good practice in water and sanitation in schools requires involvement at several levels.

At a practical level it requires schools having sufficient and appropriate water and sanitation facilities. This includes not only having adequate toilet facilities and a supply of drinking water but also being supplied with items such as cleaning materials, brushes, brooms, soap and towels.

Schools also require workable and clear systems to ensure that facilities are well maintained and that repairs are dealt with quickly and efficiently. In addition there need to be transparent systems which indicate who is responsible for cleaning. The ways in which this is shown to happen vary. In Mirzapur in India, there are instances of a committed individual helping to instil a sense of responsibility in students and also the employment of a sweeper to support children in cleaning tasks; in Tanahu in Nepal, responsibility is directly delegated to groups of children; in Bhutan it is instigated through the appointment of health coordinators. However, in all cases, the outcome is the creation of an ethos where teachers and children feel a sense of ownership and pride in their facilities and environment and work together, in a way which is not exploitative of children, to

maintain high standards of cleanliness.

Examples from Tanahu in Nepal and Mirzapur in India show the importance of there being synergy between what happens in school and what happens in the community at large. In order for school to be more than simply an isolated example of good practice, what happens at school is shown to be most effectively reinforced if it is reflected in the community as a whole. The Nepal and India examples show the importance of children seeing good practice in water and sanitation not simply as something that happens in their school but as being part of a community-wide movement to improve facilities and practice in every aspect of their lives.

At the level of teaching and learning the examples show the importance of children learning why good health and hygiene practice is important. This can happen through the curriculum or, as is the case in Bhutan, can be supported through extra-curricular activities, but the important message is that children need to understand the link between hygiene practices and good health if these practices are not to be seen simply as something you have to do in school but as practices which are essential in all areas of your life.

Finally, and most importantly in terms of reducing discrimination, the good practice schools shared a ‘whole school’ ethos of inclusion. They did not allocate tasks on a discriminatory basis; they did not favour some children while expecting others to carry out a disproportionate number of duties. Instead all duties were shared on a strictly egalitarian basis. Teachers did not assume that certain children would always sit separately in accordance with some prearranged hierarchy, nor did they make automatic, assumed links between the ‘cleanliness’ of certain groups of students and their ability to learn and be interested in learning. Instead they took as their starting point equal respect and dignity for all children regardless of which particular group they came from. Such an inclusive ethos requires active commitment not just from individual teachers but from everyone in the school. It may well require a recognition that certain groups of children might be disadvantaged and some might require additional support. However, the focus is not so much on these disadvantaged groups but on creating egalitarian practices which leave no room either for favouritism or discrimination.

# 6

## Transfer of Good Practice from the School to the Community

All country research teams were asked to look specifically at whether there were incidences of good practices in relation to water and sanitation being transferred from school to communities. This chapter will explore the extent to which this occurred firstly in relation to good health and hygiene practices and secondly in relation to practices of non-discrimination.

### 6.1 Transfer of Good Health and Hygiene Practice

The most positive and explicit examples of individual transfer of good practice were found in the Bangladesh report. In Noagaon district almost everyone said they discuss with their parents and neighbours about: handwashing before eating and after defecation with soap, ash or soil; drinking arsenic-free tube-well water or boiling water before drinking; keeping latrines clean; keeping water near the toilet and keeping soap for handwashing after defecation. The statement by a parent confirmed this:

*Ten to fifteen years ago the situation was not like now. People used to defecate in the open field and bushes and very few used to wash their hands with soap or even with ash after defecation. Now our children are learning it in their school and not only discussing with parents but with neighbours as well, showing us how to wash our hands before eating and after defecation.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

The report contains several positive examples from all districts of children transferring good practice to

their families and neighbourhood, sometimes by discussing issues with family and friends, and sometimes by directly changing practices:

*One day I found that some ash was kept in the toilet in a pot. I found that my granddaughter had kept ash in the toilet after learning about proper sanitation from her school. The same day, I bought soap and arranged for a place for keeping it near the water point.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

*Once I went fishing with my daughter. At one point she felt the urge to relieve herself. I told her to go in the open field but she refused to do so. She told me that it causes damage to all of us by spreading diseases. She came back home to use the toilet and joined me later.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

One child spoke about a time when she was sitting with all her family members and her neighbours and started informing them about how germs are transmitted and why good hygiene is important and reported that 'everybody was listening very carefully. My grandma said we should definitely think about all that I discussed about for our betterment.' However, some of them said that it was easier to motivate younger children and that when they discuss these matters with their parents they did not always want to listen to them. Teachers recognized that it was harder to motivate parents from poorer families who were constantly busy with their work or struggling for survival, although even in these instances there were reports of parents being motivated by children to find ways of improving their practices:

*We are very poor. We do not have a latrine at our home. My parents are not able to buy soap. I told my parents I would stop going to school if they do not install a latrine as I was asked to do so at my school. My parents discussed the issue with our neighbours and one of our neighbours permitted us to share their latrine.*  
(Bangladesh Report)

These very direct examples from Bangladesh show that teaching children good practices at school and explaining to them the reasons for carrying out these practices can have very positive influences on the whole community. This is also reflected in the Bhutan report in which:

*Parents of the students of remoter schools said that they learned good health and hygiene related practices from their children.*  
(Bhutan Report)

In India and Nepal, researchers also recorded examples of transfer of good hygiene practices from school to the community. In Tanahu district of Nepal, Child Clubs organized regular cleaning campaigns which required one member from each household to take part in community cleaning programmes. Children persuaded families to construct toilets in their respective households. In India, too, we are told that children who use toilets properly in school are more likely to promote toilet cleaning in their homes and make sure all family members use the toilet properly. However, the researchers in India also feel that for this to happen the overall environment needs to be positive, and they recognize the synergy which needs to exist between school and community:

*The school and the community are linked – one reinforces and strengthens the good practices of the other.*  
(India Report)

The India report suggests that schools which promote good practices are not so likely to be successful in transferring these practices if there

is not a corresponding programme to change practices in the wider community. This belief is also expressed in the Nepal report which suggests that good practice could be transferred from school to community in Tanahu because both entities were committed to changing practices. However, in Chitwan and Kapilvastu, apart from a few isolated examples of children from Chitwan sharing hygiene knowledge with their families, in general 'such knowledge learned in their textbooks and from teachers was generally applied only to themselves and not transferred to household and community levels.'

Nepal researchers speak of the need for holistic intervention which recognizes the interconnectedness of schooling and other factors of students' lives. In Kapilvastu they suggest that this shared vision is not present. Only one of the one hundred and fifty houses which formed the catchment area of one school visited had a toilet. In addition to this, researchers discovered that the design of toilets attached to or close to houses in many ways contradicted normal cultural practices and hence transfer of practice from schools to household faced an insurmountable cultural block:

*The cultural practice of using an open space instead of closed premises attached to a house or building, and socialization of children accordingly, also did not match with the toilet construction in schools.*  
(Nepal Report)

A man from Kapilvastu who is now working as a teacher in Kathmandu spoke about how most Hindus from Kapilvastu believed that it was not religiously right to defecate inside; and children from Kapilvastu said they felt more comfortable defecating in the open. The belief, particularly amongst older members of the community, that defecating inside is not the right thing to do, was also enacted in one of the role plays in one of the schools in India where children acted out how the grandmother of a Class 5 student told him that a witch wanders around the toilet and she will catch children; and how some families continue to defecate in the open even when they have a toilet at home.

These discussions of transfer or lack of transfer of good practices in Nepal in many ways concur with the analysis of the India report in feeling that transfer of good practice from school to community will only properly occur in a situation where changed hygiene practices are being equally promoted in school and in the community, and where the norms being presented in school are able to be understood and accepted by the community.

The reports point to different ways in which good practice can be transferred. In Bangladesh, transfer happens via individual children; whereas in Tanahu in Nepal it occurs through more formally organized campaigns. The Bhutan report too, while acknowledging ways in which individual children share good practice with parents, also focuses on more formal channels of communication such as parent-teacher meetings, cultural programmes in schools, participation in international handwashing days and also raising parents' awareness through the School-based Parents Education and Awareness Programme which has been described in Chapter Four.

The differences of ways in which good hygiene practice is transferred in the four countries make it hard to draw definitive conclusions. The rich quotations from Bangladesh show that good practice can be very positively transferred from individual children to family or community members even when the community itself is very poor and not well endowed with facilities, for instance the example of the girl whose family negotiated with a neighbour that they could use their toilet. These examples from Bangladesh show clearly that the enthusiasm of individual children can be a powerful force in changing community practice. It is interesting to compare the enthusiasm with which many of the Bangladeshi children felt the need to share good practice they had learnt at school with children in Chitwan and Kapilvastu who seemed to regard the health education they learnt at school as solely a book-based subject. There is a clear message here of the importance of teachers imparting learning in a holistic way as something which is of relevance to a child's life and not merely a school-based curriculum exercise.

Examples from the India and Nepal reports suggest that such transfer is far more likely to happen if the district is part of a total sanitation campaign which targets both school and community and where the school and community are linked together and one reinforces and strengthens the good practices of the other.

The description of Kapilvastu in the Nepal report reveals how deep-rooted cultural beliefs about where defecation should take place might make it extremely hard for children to share what they have learnt in school or even to reconcile what they have learnt in school with the situation in their home. It suggests that Western notions of how cleanliness is perceived can at times contradict traditional religious beliefs about what cleanliness entails, and illustrates the crucial importance of carrying out discussions with the whole community on issues such as the siting of toilets before instigating programmes.

Finally, the example in Tanahu of Child Clubs being given responsibility to organize community cleaning programmes and also the emphasis Bhutan places on organized forums of exchange such as parent-teacher meetings and parent awareness programmes suggests a shift from the more individual transferring of information which was described in Bangladesh to more formally structured approaches.

## 6.2 Transfer of Good Non-Discrimination Practice

The extent to which children felt able to transfer any good non-discriminatory practices they might have learnt at school to their family or wider community is harder to ascertain. This is not surprising. It is far easier for children to raise the issue of using soap or handwashing than to discuss deep-rooted cultural divisions and prejudices. As has been shown in the Introduction, social divisions based on notions of perceived cleanliness and uncleanliness are very deep-rooted throughout South Asia. Bayly, writing about India, speaks of how:

*... even in the colonial period this increasingly compelling differentiation*

*between those of 'clean' and 'unclean' caste had become the most powerful and enduring expression of 'modern caste experience'.*  
(Bayly, 2001, p.312)

In a context in which notions of identity and social status are so closely intertwined with issues such as who one can take water from or eat with or sit next to, raising issues which challenge these beliefs is inevitably potentially threatening. However, the reports do all contain examples which show how the context of discrimination is changing and how, within this changing context, school can provide children with an opportunity to develop practices which do not support existing discriminatory behaviour and in this way can become an agent of change.

### **The changing context**

All four reports give indications of this changing context. In India we are told how young people recognized that 'the persistence of caste and community identities is challenged (especially in schools, at work, in movies and during other social events)'. In Bangladesh, a teacher who is from the tea gardens talks about the way in which discrimination was far worse when he was a child and says, 'that attitude towards children from tea gardens still exists to some extent, although it has changed a lot in the course of time.' The report also gives examples of the beginnings of friendship between Adivasi and Muslim children and two instances of Adivasi boys being invited to Muslim homes. The Nepal report cites a Dalit father in Tanahu saying that in that region untouchability is no longer practised. In Bhutan a Dalit man speaks of how '20 years back, I was studying in a school in Samtse ... the division of caste was so strong ... The students from the higher caste groups of Bhavans and Chhetris would never mix with us. Now I am here in Samtse and I see a big difference.'

Such changes are not universal. Chapter Four has shown many examples of discrimination based upon traditional assumptions that certain people are less clean than others. However, it is important that the context of change is recognized and acknowledged and that positive practice in schools should be established around an awareness of this changing context.

### **The public and the private**

All the reports acknowledge that there are differences between the type of behaviour which is allowed in a more public zone and that which takes place within the home – a difference recognized by Bayly in India where she speaks about how landlord and peasant might share a cigarette in the fields but how 'within those sensitive zones of "hearth and home" personal conduct and standards of household purity are closely scrutinized' (Bayly, 2001, pp.338–9). In the Nepal report a social worker from Bandipur is quoted as saying, 'These days, we don't eat in our kitchen together but in other places untouchability doesn't exist.' Many, although not all, of the children interviewed in India are well aware that they hold views which are not necessarily in line with those of their parents. In one of the role plays carried out in India, children from an upper primary school:

*... enacted how parents ask them not to eat with their Dalit friends or go to Dalit homes; but how they still play, eat and sit with their friends (regardless of caste):*  
*'Everything is okay between friends, we just do not talk about it at home.'*  
(India Report)

Discussion with a group of adolescent boys in India showed that friendship was very important to them and that they would not hesitate to eat or sit with a boy from a different community but still would not feel comfortable openly challenging such caste-based behaviour. In Bangladesh there are examples of Adivasi boys, although not girls, beginning to sit in class next to Muslim classmates although the instance given of two Adivasi boys being invited back to Muslim homes was said to be rare.

These positive examples are not universal, but they do show societies that are in a process of change and also show the important and pivotal role that school can play in supporting such changes. Although young people still might not have the confidence to actually bring their new practices back to their homes, school can allow them a safe place where they can begin to participate in the change which they recognize as

happening and begin to break down, in at least one of their environments, traditional divisions which they might still not be able to comfortably transgress at home. However when, as was apparent in some schools in all countries, discriminatory practices are not just condoned but are practised either overtly or subtly by teachers themselves, school will merely serve to reinforce discriminatory attitudes.

### **Promoting transfer of good practices**

As has been seen above, schools can either reinforce existing prejudices or can act as agents of change to help open up to children new ways of looking at the world. In order to examine how non-discriminatory practice might be transferred from school to the community it is helpful to look back to the earlier section of this chapter which examines the factors which have supported transfer of good hygiene practices. These examples show that, if good practice is to be transferred, children need not only to have learnt good practices at school but also to understand the reasons for these practices and to see their relevance not just in school but in their lives outside school. They also show how there needs to be synergy between school and community with channels which allow good practice in one context to reinforce it in the other. These elements all need to be present if changing practice in non-discrimination is also to be transferred.

To begin with, a school can only encourage good practices in equity and equality if these are rigorously practised within the school. The contrast in the India report between practice in some of the schools in Mirzapur and those in Lalitpur reinforces this point. If, as happens in some of the schools in Lalitpur, teachers themselves act in discriminatory ways, for example by refusing to accept water from certain children or making others take an unequal role in cleaning toilets, this behaviour will only serve to reinforce existing divisions between children. If on the other hand schools create an ethos of equality in which all tasks and privileges are equally shared, then children will begin to see new ways of relating to groups who may traditionally have been looked down upon. This establishment of an ethos of equality requires more than individual actions by individual teachers. In the previous chapter we saw examples in both Bangladesh and Bhutan of

individual teachers trying to alter traditional seating arrangements but failing to make any significant change. If practice is to be changed and sustained there needs to be a whole-school commitment and whole-school policies which are implemented as a matter of course by all staff.

Secondly, in the same way that children need to see the reasons for good hygiene practices, they also need not just to see non-discrimination practised in school but also to understand what discrimination is, how it occurs and the effects it can have. Some interesting work in this area has been carried out by Care India. Care India speaks of its mission as being 'to facilitate lasting change in the wellbeing and social position of vulnerable groups, especially women and girls'. The organization has recognized that, in order to do this, 'social learning' needs to have a clear place within the school curriculum alongside other traditional curriculum areas. Care India have designed a Social Learning Package adapted for different school grades. This package, alongside the orientation training which teachers receive, is designed to enable teachers to help children become more aware of the complexity of the world they are living in and, amongst other objectives, to enable children to:

*Understand the diversities that different cultures have in family structures and practices, and recognize the inequities that are prevalent in their families and in society at large.*  
(Care India Reference Manual, Grade 6, p. 12)

The approach of these learning materials is to help children understand both their own identity and their relationships with others and the emphasis is always on celebrating the positive aspects of diversity at the same time as recognizing the importance of everyone sharing universal rights and responsibilities. It is interesting that none of the researchers in the water and sanitation study make any mention of 'social learning' being a part of the curriculum at the schools they visited. This suggests that, even when children were exposed to equitable practices, there was no corresponding opportunity to discuss, in a formal teaching setting, challenges to traditional viewpoints.

Thirdly, as was shown in the section on transfer of good hygiene practice above, transfer requires links and open channels of communication between school and community. Parents will often not have been exposed to the same experiences as their children and might well find their changing attitudes threatening and difficult to accept. The Care India packages give an interesting example which is pertinent to this study in which a school had created a Cleanliness Committee which had responsibility for tidying up the school premises:

*One parent happened to pass by the school at that time. He at once called his child and asked in anger, "Do I send you to school to study or pick up garbage, come home, I will make you pick up the garbage." The child was quiet, but the teacher spoke to the parent and explained to him that his was not the only child doing the cleaning. He further explained the concept of committees and why the children were being given certain responsibilities. Thereafter, discussions were held with the parents and community at large in order to avoid repetition of such incidents.'*  
(Care India Reference Manual, Grade 6, p.64)

This example shows the importance of teachers supporting children in sharing new practices. One cannot expect children to carry the whole burden of defending new ways of thinking. Instead, either on an individual basis as happened in the example above, or through more formal channels such as the parent–teacher meetings or parents' awareness courses spoken about in the Bhutan report, teachers need to be prepared to support children in sharing new concepts with their families.

### 6.3 Summary of Transfer of Good Practice

All countries showed positive examples of good practice in health and hygiene behaviour being transferred from children to their families. In the Bangladesh report in particular, there were many examples of individual children sharing health and hygiene behaviour they had learnt at school with their relatives and in some cases getting these relatives to change their own practice.

In India and Nepal, the findings tended to show that good practice learnt in schools is far more effectively shared if the school is in a community which itself is part of a total sanitation campaign. If this does not happen, hygiene practices learnt at school tend to remain as curriculum exercises rather than become something which one takes into the rest of life. Nepal in particular gave an example of how, when practice at school contradicts traditional community beliefs of what constitutes cleanliness and where defecation should take place, it can be very difficult for children to reconcile what they learn at school with the beliefs of their families and community.

While all reports had examples of good practice in health and hygiene behaviour being transferred from school to home, there was little written about the transfer of good non-discriminatory behaviour. There was a recognition in some reports that even when discriminatory practices were not practised or practised less in public they could still exist within the home. There was a clear recognition that traditional discriminatory practices, while still existing, were changing and, within this context of change, school provided children with a safe place within which they could begin to participate in this change – for example by having friends from other social groups – even if they did not feel able to share these practices with their parents.

While some schools clearly advocated non-discriminatory practices, there were no examples given of children having the opportunity to actually learn about and discuss issues related to discrimination as part of their curriculum.

# 7

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Conclusions

The UNICEF study points to several conclusions, some of which reflect earlier findings of the initial literature study and others which differ to some extent from these findings. While some conclusions are inevitably specific to individual countries others reveal messages which pertain across the four countries.

An overall conclusion which can be drawn is that lack of access to water and sanitation does not appear on its own to be a reason for permanent exclusion of children from school, although it might well provide a contributory factor. Most children said that if they had the opportunity to study then they would, and that teachers turning up regularly and teaching well were what made it worthwhile coming to school. This emphasis on the importance of seeing water and sanitation issues within the overall context of quality education is important. The India report in particular expresses concern that the lack of coordination between those involved in water and sanitation and those involved in education can create 'one-dimensional preoccupations' with some individual schools becoming a showcase for cleanliness to the detriment of children's learning.

However, parallel to this, the study revealed clear evidence that decent water and sanitation facilities did certainly make a difference to the quality of children's experience. It also showed how, despite examples in all countries which contradicted this, there were still many examples both of some children being temporarily excluded from school because of inadequate facilities (this was particularly an issue for menstruating girls) and also of discrimination playing itself out in the domains of water and sanitation and of perceptions of cleanliness and uncleanliness.

### Sufficiency and maintenance of facilities

Although the prime purpose of this study was to examine whether certain children were discriminated against in relation to water and sanitation, this could not be ascertained without a prior examination of the sufficiency and adequacy of facilities. The research showed very large variations within all four countries. In all four countries, although the schools were selected on the basis that they had been supplied with water and sanitation facilities, there were many instances of schools which had insufficient access both to safe drinking water and to toilets. The result was that many children went without water and chose either to go home or go outside the school premises to defecate. There also appeared to be uncertainty as to who had responsibility for maintenance of facilities with the result that many had been inoperable for some time.

While some facilities in all countries were reported as being well maintained and clean, many others were described as very dirty with no equipment being provided for cleaning and no soap or towels for children's handwashing. The result was that children were loath to use school toilets. In all schools where toilets were cleaned children played a major role in this cleaning. In India, especially, concern was expressed that children could be asked to play too great a role in cleaning; however, examples in other countries showed that certain schools had created a situation in which children felt proud of the responsibility they had been given and did not appear resentful of this task. Good practice was observed in schools where it was clear who held responsibility and where teachers worked with children in maintaining facilities rather than simply imposing this task on them.

## Exclusion and discrimination

### ***Menstruating girls***

All four country studies concluded that girls, particularly adolescent girls, were disadvantaged in terms of toilet facilities. While boys expressed less concern about sanitation facilities, interviews with girls showed that there was an almost total absence of sensitivity to the requirements of menstruating girls. Girls who were menstruating tended to have nowhere to wash their sanitary cloths or dispose of their sanitary pads. They were also embarrassed by the way in which the design of facilities did not allow them necessary privacy and dignity. The result, in all countries, was that girls who were menstruating either carried on with their studies in a state of continual anxiety or they appeared simply to take days off. Both the girls and their mothers were aware that this was detrimental to their studies. In all countries menstruation was seen as a very private affair and schools do not appear to see it as their role to provide either knowledge or support – in Bangladesh, where menstruation is actually a part of the curriculum, girls and teachers reported that these sections were missed out.

### ***Children perceived as ‘unclean’***

In all schools in all four countries ‘cleanliness’ was seen as being very important. Considerable attention was paid to children’s appearance with regular inspections to see that both they and their uniforms were clean. The positive aspect of this is the pride that children take in looking clean and smart when they come to school. However, inevitably certain children, particularly those from poorer families, found it hard to adhere to these standards. In some schools there appeared to be an assumption made by teachers that children who were less clean were also those who were less able and came from families who were less committed to their studies.

Researchers in all four countries closely observed whether or not certain children were discriminated against in terms of toilet cleaning duties, access to drinking water, being given privileges such as fetching water for teachers and seating arrangements at meal times and in the classroom. While all countries had examples of schools in which there was complete equality in all these areas, in many there was considerable discrimination.

The particular groups of children who were discriminated against varied both from country to country and within countries. While traditional caste-based discrimination was very apparent and overtly expressed by both teachers and some children in the Lalitpur district of Uttar Pradesh in India, it was not evident in Mirzapur district. In Nepal, caste-based discrimination was not apparent in the schools visited but there was some discrimination against children from the very poor Chepang community. In Bangladesh, some instances of discrimination were shown against Adivasi children and also children from the tea gardens but not against the richer Manipuri children. In Bhutan children from the Uraon community as well as children of poorer urban labourers and poorer farmers were seen as being children who often arrived dirty at school and also could sit separately from other children. This diversity of findings shows that it is hard to place discrimination into clear-cut categories. While traditional discrimination in terms of caste and ethnicity does still exist at school it is not universal. However, one overriding fact which does emerge is the importance of poverty as a key factor in discrimination.

Children themselves were very aware that traditional patterns of discrimination and exclusion, although still strong in many areas, were also beginning to change. While some of them still expressed clear opinions that certain groups of children were ‘dirty’ and not to be mixed with, others spoke of friendships which went beyond caste or ethnicity while still saying that they might be uneasy at talking about these friendships with their parents. This recognition of change was a positive finding in the research. However, alongside this there were also indications that new elites were emerging which, like the old elites, often manifested themselves in terms of cleanliness. All countries have some examples of teacher favouritism towards children who are wealthier, whose parents have power or influence, who are seen to be more clever and who appear neat and clean. Although these children might be the sons and daughters of traditional elite families, researchers are clear in pointing out that this is not always the case. In all countries there are examples of these children manifesting their superiority in terms of cleanliness and appearance and also examples of them being the children on

whom status is conferred by them being asked to fetch water for the teacher and being the children who are exempt from cleaning duties.

### Examples of good practice

All four reports showed individual schools which exhibited very positive examples of good practice. The precise way in which this good practice manifested itself inevitably varied according to particular country contexts; however, all of the examples included certain key elements.

Good practice schools all had adequate facilities and, if facilities broke down, they knew who to approach in order to get them repaired. These facilities included essential materials for cleaning the toilets and also sufficient available supplies of soap and towels. Facilities were kept clean and everyone was clear about who was responsible for cleaning. The way in which cleaning duties were carried out varied from country to country but a key common element was that those with responsibility, whether this was the village pradhan as in India or Child Clubs as in Nepal, felt and generated a real sense of pride in ensuring that facilities were clean. In all the good practice schools children had a role, sometimes a key role, in cleaning duties. However, there was no example of them feeling exploited and teachers were seen to actively support children in carrying out this role.

Children in these schools were seen not only to practise good hygiene behaviour but also to be aware of the reasons for this behaviour. An understanding of the importance of good practices had obviously been part of their curriculum and they were well aware of the link between good health and hygiene and the reduction of disease.

Finally, and probably most importantly, these schools were ones which had generated an ethos of equality. All duties and tasks were distributed on a completely equal basis without any favouritism or discrimination. Teachers did not assume that certain children would automatically sit separately and all children were accorded equal respect and dignity. Within such an ethos, it is not so much that steps are taken to discourage exclusion but rather that inclusive procedures were created which, in the words of the Nepal report, left 'no room for exclusion'.

### Transfer of good practice from school to community

All countries also gave examples of good hygiene behaviour being shared between school and home. The way in which this happened varied considerably between the different countries. While Bangladesh gives some extremely positive examples of individual children encouraging their parents to carry out what they have learnt in school, Bhutan reveals more formalized approaches which take place through parent-teacher meetings or parent awareness programmes. Interestingly, researchers in India and Nepal, whose good schools showed some exemplary practices, are very clear that transfer of good practice between school and home is far more likely to happen if a holistic approach is taken with school and community both being part of a total sanitation campaign.

In terms of children feeling able to transfer good practice in non-discrimination which they have experienced at school to home, the findings are less conclusive. While several children speak about how they feel very happy eating with and sitting next to children from other groups in school, they do also acknowledge that such behaviour would not necessarily be condoned at home. In this way many of the children showed themselves to be very aware of the distinction which still could exist between behaviour in public and private zones. However, the very positive way in which many of them spoke about friendships with children from different groups within school did reveal the pivotal role which an inclusive school can play in allowing children to explore different ways of relating and giving them a safe place where they are free of the social, hierarchical divisions which can occur outside of school. The issue which still needs to be explored is how the behaviours which they feel free to exhibit in school might be extended outside of school.

## 7.2 Recommendations

The overall purpose of this study was to:

*raise awareness both at Government and practitioner levels of the part that issues related to*

*water and sanitation play in children's exclusion from and discrimination within education, and to suggest actions which need to be taken at the level of policy and practice which would help to redress this situation.*

The findings fall into three main areas:

- ▶ That there need to be sufficient, well-maintained facilities to ensure equity for all students
- ▶ That there are particular issues of inclusion and non-discrimination which need to be addressed
- ▶ That there need to be procedures in place to facilitate the transfer of good practice learnt in schools to the community.

All three of these issues need to be addressed:

- ▶ At the level of national policy
- ▶ By those involved in implementation
- ▶ At school level.

This study is a regional one and recognizes that individual countries differ, hence the specific ways in which they will seek to find ways of improving their practice in regard to these issues will also differ. What follows below is a series of questions which need to be addressed by policy makers, by those involved in implementation (managers, supervisors and trainers), and by those working at the level of schools. These questions are grouped under the three headings of facilities, non-discrimination and transfer of good practice from school to community. Each set of questions is followed by suggested requirements for addressing the questions.

### **7.2.1 Sufficiency and maintenance of facilities**

Country reports showed enormous variation in both sufficiency and maintenance of facilities. In one instance in Nepal there appeared to be a contradiction between the community, which held traditional beliefs that toilets should not be within or near living spaces, and the actual siting of toilets. In many instances there appeared to be confusion as to who was responsible for maintenance of facilities. Many of the good practice schools were in areas which had benefited from specific Water and Sanitation in Schools projects. While several of these

were excellent there is always a concern as to how sustainable this practice will be after the project comes to an end and also whether the good practice in the project could be replicated in other schools.

Similar variation occurred in terms of the cleanliness of facilities. While some school toilets were found to be impressively clean, many others were described as 'filthy' and 'unusable'. Much of the cleaning was carried out by children. While there were instances of discrimination and exploitation, all countries also had innovative examples of ensuring that children felt a sense of responsibility and pride in keeping facilities clean, for example Child Clubs in Nepal and competitions being arranged between children in Bhutan. Schools which exhibited good practice showed teachers playing an active role in supporting children in carrying out cleaning duties.

### **Questions which need to be addressed**

*For policy makers:*

- ▶ What policies are there on standards and 'sufficiency' in relation to water and sanitation facilities in schools?
- ▶ Which documents contain reference to the fact that sufficient water and sanitation facilities in schools are an essential part of an inclusive school?
- ▶ Which government department has explicit responsibility for this area?
- ▶ How is coordination between those involved with water and sanitation and those involved in education organized?
- ▶ What do policies and regulations state about who is responsible for the maintenance of these facilities?
- ▶ What procedures are in place to show how these policies will be implemented at school level?
- ▶ Where do schools get funds for maintenance from?
- ▶ Is there a maintenance grant given to schools?
- ▶ What are the national standards on school cleanliness and what are the systems for monitoring these?
- ▶ What do policies and regulations say about cleaning toilets and about the involvement of children in cleaning in ways which are not exploitative of them?

*For managers, supervisors and trainers:*

- ▶ How do you consult with community and school members, including children, on where they feel toilets should be sited?
- ▶ How do you ensure that good practice developed in specific projects is shared and used for influencing policy and strategy, and that it feeds into wider coverage?
- ▶ In what ways do you work with people in communities and with children and teachers in schools to work out how they might best ensure that facilities are well looked after?
- ▶ How do you ensure that the involvement of children in cleaning duties is organized in ways which are not exploitative of them and which are not detrimental to their learning?

*At school level (teachers, pupils and parents):*

- ▶ Who should you approach if you feel your water and sanitation facilities are inadequate?
- ▶ Who is responsible for maintenance of these facilities?
- ▶ Who is responsible for ensuring that school facilities are regularly cleaned?
- ▶ Is sufficient equipment provided, for example cleaning equipment for toilets and also soap and towels for children?
- ▶ If children are involved in cleaning duties how can you help to ensure that this is not done in an exploitative way?
- ▶ Are cleaning duties shared out equitably between all children without discrimination or favouritism, and if not how might this be improved?
- ▶ How do teachers actively support children in cleaning?
- ▶ How can you help to create an ethos of pride and responsibility in which all members of the school feel they have an active role to play in ensuring that facilities are kept clean?
- ▶ Who monitors cleanliness of facilities?

### **Requirements for addressing these questions**

*For policy makers:*

- ▶ Education policies which state internationally or regionally laid down standards for the ratio of water and sanitation facilities per number of children which should be provided and who is responsible for maintenance and overall monitoring of facilities

- ▶ Close collaboration at all levels between Education and Water and Sanitation Departments and officials
- ▶ Clear procedures which spell out how maintenance will be implemented and which will ensure that schools have sufficient resources to undertake ongoing maintenance and cleaning of facilities

*For managers, supervisors and trainers:*

- ▶ Discussing with community members, children and parents to ensure there is a common vision and agreement on what is required when new water and sanitation facilities are proposed
- ▶ Collaborating with local government officials and school/community members to ensure systems are in place which will enable facilities to be regularly maintained and kept clean and usable even after specific projects come to an end
- ▶ Negotiating with government officials to establish procedures for sharing good practice and mainstreaming successful projects

*At school level (teachers, pupils and parents):*

- ▶ Agreed school policies on who is responsible for cleaning facilities
- ▶ Adequate provision of hardware such as cleaning materials, soap, etc.
- ▶ Agreed structures worked out with children which ensure that children feel proud of their facilities and help to maintain them in ways which involve all children but are not exploitative of them
- ▶ Active involvement of teachers
- ▶ Agreements which ensure who is responsible for monitoring the cleanliness of facilities

### **7.2.2 Inclusion and non-discrimination**

In all countries a high proportion of menstruating girls were seen to be temporarily excluded each month because of inadequate sanitation facilities. The fact that there were no facilities for them to wash sanitary cloths or dispose of pads, and also the lack of privacy, meant that many girls simply took days off when they were menstruating. There appeared to be little in the way of imparting knowledge about menstruation and examples were given of schools omitting sections of the curriculum which dealt with menstruation.

Country studies showed that in all schools visited the personal cleanliness of children was considered very important. While this is positive in that it can instil a sense of self-respect and pride there were examples of children, especially those from poorer families, who came to school not meeting the required standards. There were also examples of some teachers making an implicit assumption that these children were somehow less able and less motivated than others. While some schools had established very positive ways of ensuring inclusion of all children, for example through equity in allocation of duties or privileges and in seating arrangements, others showed clear disparities. Sometimes children were discriminated against along traditional lines of caste and ethnicity; sometimes on grounds of poverty. There were also indications of the emergence of new elites with children who came from richer or more influential families and children who appeared more clever, neater and cleaner being given additional privileges and exempt from cleaning duties.

### Questions which need to be addressed

#### *For policy makers:*

- ▶ What policies exist on non-discrimination in education?
- ▶ What steps are being taken to implement these policies?
- ▶ What initial teacher training and in-service teacher training programmes are there on inclusion and non-discrimination?
- ▶ How is the importance of the 'social curriculum' recognized and are all schools encouraged to spend some teaching time focusing on issues such as social relationships, diversity and equity?
- ▶ Are any figures collected on the proportion of girls who miss school when they are menstruating and the effect this has on their achievement in education?
- ▶ Is menstruation covered as a curriculum topic and if so is the teaching of this topic included in staff training programmes?

#### *For managers, supervisors and trainers:*

- ▶ When starting new projects do you spend time talking with a full range of community members and children at school in order to understand

the profile of the community and possible areas of discrimination?

- ▶ What steps do you take to ensure that any projects address these potential areas of inequality?
- ▶ Do you discuss with adolescent girls the particular needs they have and their suggestions for addressing these needs and incorporate these when you design facilities?

#### *At school level (teachers, pupils and parents):*

- ▶ How can you support those children who might find it difficult to maintain school standards of cleanliness, for example providing soap or opportunities to wash clothes or clean shoes?
- ▶ How can the School Management Committee and teachers work together to ensure that teachers do not make automatic assumptions that poor children, who might find it difficult to come to school clean, are also less clever or less motivated?
- ▶ How do you ensure that when tasks such as toilet cleaning are allocated this is done on a strict basis of equality?
- ▶ How do you also ensure that privileges, such as fetching water for a teacher, are also allocated equally amongst all children?
- ▶ What do your school policies say in relation to ensuring that children mix between groups, for example are they encouraged to sit in different places, when groups or pairs are formed do you encourage different mixings, do you encourage friendships across different groups?
- ▶ If certain children always choose to sit on their own are there unthreatening ways in which you can give them the confidence to join in with others?
- ▶ How does your school make space for the 'social curriculum'? How does it celebrate the diversity of children in the class, for example their different languages, cultures, etc., but also emphasize the way in which everyone should have equal rights and take equal responsibilities?
- ▶ How do classroom teachers record the number of girls who might be missing class regularly because of menstruation?
- ▶ How do they ensure that these girls can catch up with work they have missed?
- ▶ What small things can you do to support girls at school when they are menstruating, for example arranging for a place where they can

wash and dry cloths or having a stock of sanitary pads?

- ▶ What ideas do you have about how you might best address the topic of menstruation in the classroom, for example having a woman teacher or a woman from the community come in to have a session with a group of girls?

### Requirements for addressing these questions

*For policy makers:*

- ▶ Education policies on inclusion and non-discrimination and clear guidelines, regulations and directives which show how to implement these policies
- ▶ Monitoring on whether these policies are being implemented
- ▶ A review of initial teacher training and in-service training to ensure both of these cover practical ways in which teachers can ensure inclusion and non-discrimination
- ▶ Designated time being given within the curriculum framework to areas of 'social curriculum' which will include topics on issues such as non-discrimination and also menstruation
- ▶ Analysis of attendance figures to see if significant numbers of adolescent girls are missing school because of being unable to manage their menstruation

*For managers, supervisors and trainers:*

- ▶ Discussing with adolescent girls and any other children who might be excluded, listening closely to what they are saying and ensuring that their requirements and ideas are responded to in practical ways
- ▶ Discussing with the full range of community members prior to implementing a project, being aware of any possible issues of discrimination and seeking to address these

*At school level (teachers, pupils, parents):*

- ▶ Looking for ways of supporting children who might find it difficult to adhere to school standards of cleanliness
- ▶ Monitoring girls who might be missing school because of menstruation, listen to what they

say about this and find ways of helping them catch up on work they have missed

- ▶ Looking at ways you can better support menstruating girls, for example by arranging for a supply of pads and cloths in school
- ▶ Ensuring that all tasks (such as cleaning) and privileges (such as fetching water for teachers) are allocated on a strictly equal basis
- ▶ Looking at ways of encouraging different seating patterns – for example sometimes organizing children into groups which include a different social mix
- ▶ Ensuring that 'social curriculum' topics are given equal value to more academic subjects

### 7.2.3 Transfer of good practice from school to families and community

All country reports gave positive examples of the transfer of good practice in terms of health and hygiene behaviour from school to families. Sometimes this happened on an individual basis. Other schools organized parent-teacher meetings or parent awareness programmes. Researchers were very clear that positive interaction between school and home was most likely to occur when both school and community were being targeted in total sanitation programmes.

In terms of sharing non-discriminatory practices, children appeared very aware that they were living in a changing context and that traditional discriminatory practice was being challenged. However, they also recognized that there often appeared to be different standards between private and public places with traditional practices still being practised at home. Within this context school was seen as an important safe place in which they could expand their group of friends and not be confined by dictates which might exist at home.

### Questions which need to be addressed

*For policy makers:*

- ▶ How does education recognize the important role which school can play as a positive agent of change?
- ▶ How is this role discussed in teacher training programmes and in-service staff development programmes?

*For managers, supervisors and trainers:*

- ▶ Do you recognize the importance of synergy between school and community and how do you seek to build creatively on this?

*At school level (teachers, pupils, parents):*

- ▶ How do teachers approach issues of health education? Do they see it not just as a textbook subject but as an area of learning which affects a child's everyday life?
- ▶ How do they encourage children to share good practices they have learnt at school with their families?
- ▶ In what ways do teachers recognize that one important role of school is that it provides children with a safe place where they can develop friendships with different groups of children in a way they might not be able to do at home?
- ▶ Do teachers encourage children to look at ways in which non-discriminatory practices can extend beyond school into the community?
- ▶ How do you as a school seek to work with parents? What forums exist where issues dealt with at school can be discussed with parents? How do teachers support children if differences emerge between home and school cultures?

## **Requirements for addressing these questions**

*For policy makers:*

- ▶ Education policies which acknowledge the important role that education can play in encouraging positive social change
- ▶ Ensuring that these policies are discussed in all teacher training programmes

*For managers, supervisors and trainers:*

- ▶ Recognizing the importance of synergy between school and the wider community

*At school level (teachers, pupils and parents):*

- ▶ Teaching health education in ways which make it relevant for children's lives outside school
- ▶ Supporting children to use school as a place where they can feel safe to explore friendships outside of their traditional social or ethnic groupings
- ▶ Working with parents, either individually or in parent groups in order to build a bridge between school and home

# Bibliography

The main citations in this regional synthesis come from the four country reports from India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. In addition the following works are referred to.

Barr, E., Durston, S., Jenkins, R., Onada, E. and Pradhan, A. (2007). *Dalits in India and Nepal: Policy Options for Improving Social Inclusion in Education*. UNICEF South Asia: Nepal and India in conjunction with Maastricht University.

[www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFsDalits\\_in\\_India\\_and\\_Nepal\\_Policy\\_Options\\_for\\_Improving\\_Social\\_Inclusion.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/PDFsDalits_in_India_and_Nepal_Policy_Options_for_Improving_Social_Inclusion.pdf)

Bayly S. (2001). *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

CARE India (n.d.). *Social Learning for Upper Primary Schools - A Reference Manual for Teachers*. [www.careindia.org](http://www.careindia.org)

Centre for International Education and Research (CIER) (2009). *Education in Emergencies in South Asia: Reducing the Risks Facing Vulnerable Children*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA; and Birmingham, UK: CIER, University of Birmingham.

CREATE (Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transition and Equity) (2008). *Reconceptualising Access to Education*. Policy Briefing Number 1. DFID. [www.create-rpc.org](http://www.create-rpc.org)

Douglas, M. (1966, 2002). *Purity and Danger*. London and New York: Routledge.

Durston, S., Seel, A., Evans, J. and Huebler, F. (2008). *Developing Rights-Based Education SWAPs in South Asia: From Evidence to Action*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA.

Government of India (2005). *Annual Status of Education*. New Delhi: Department of Education.

Government of India (2007). *Selected Education Statistics*. New Delhi: Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh (2005). *Bangladesh: Unlocking the Potential. National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction*. Cited in Ollieuz (2008).

Kandel, N., Bhandari, A.R. and Lamichanne, J. (n.d.) '*Chhue, Chhaupadi and Cheekula Pratha*' - *Menstrual Sheds: Examples of Discriminatory Practices against Women in the Mid and Far Western Regions of Nepal: Considering Women as 'Impure' or 'Unclean' during Menstruation and Post-Partum Periods*. Cited in Ollieuz (2008).

Kirk, J. and Sommer, M. (2006). *Menstruation and body awareness: linking girls' health with girls' education*. Cited in Ollieuz (2008).

Namala, A. (2006) *Children and Caste-based Discrimination: Policy Concerns*. Cited in Ollieuz (2008).

Ollieuz, A. (2008). *Water and Sanitation Related Exclusion at School in South Asia, A Desk Study*. Kathmandu: UNICEF ROSA.

- Quigley D. (1998). In Gellner, D. and Quigley, D. (eds) (1999). *Contested Hierarchies: A Collaborative Ethnography of Caste among the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Sainath, P. (1999). This is the way they go to school. *The Hindu*, 28th November.
- Shah, G., Mander, H., Thorat, S., Deshpande, S. and Baviskar, A. (2006). *Untouchability in Rural India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Ullrich, H.E. (1992). *Menstrual taboos among havik brahmin women: a study of ritual change*. [www.springerlink.com/content/r5261623661p103n](http://www.springerlink.com/content/r5261623661p103n)
- UNESCO (2008). South Asia EFA Mid-Term Policy Review Conference. [www.unescobkk.org/education/efa/mda/south-asia-efa-mid-term-policy-review-conference](http://www.unescobkk.org/education/efa/mda/south-asia-efa-mid-term-policy-review-conference)
- UNESCO (2009). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009: Regional Overview for South and West Asia*. [www.unesco.org/en/efareport](http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport)
- UNICEF (2006). *Participatory Assessment of the School Sanitation and Hygiene Education Programme in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Department of Water Supply and Sewerage and UNICEF Nepal.
- UNICEF (2009). *The State of the World's Children*. New York: UNICEF.
- WaterAid Nepal (2009). *Is menstrual hygiene and management an issue for adolescent school girls?* [www.wateraid.org/nepal](http://www.wateraid.org/nepal)
- WHO/UNICEF (2008). *Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation*. Geneva: WHO; and New York: UNICEF.

# 1

## ANNEX

# Research Methodology for the Overall Study

## Approach

An in-depth qualitative approach was taken in all four countries focused on a specific number of sites and schools. For each site/school a picture of issues related to water and sanitation and inclusion in education was built up through observation of behaviour related to facilities and in-depth discussion with key stakeholders using a variety of research tools. The numbers of districts/sites/schools per country are detailed in the table below. The four country studies followed a common methodology with some adaptations to reflect local conditions.

Country	Number of Districts	Number of sites/villages	Total number of schools
Bangladesh	3	6	12
Bhutan	3	6	12
India	2	12	24
Nepal	3	6	12

## Methodology

The research was carried out in a number of stages:

- ▶ Stage 1: Selection of sites, interviews with key stakeholders and documentation review
- ▶ Stage 2: Collection of data from the research sites and schools
- ▶ Stage 3: Analysis and reporting

### Stage 1: Site selection

The districts, sites and schools were selected in consultation with the key stakeholders – primarily the government officials working in primary and secondary education at national and district levels and UNICEF Water and Sanitation and Education teams. A list of criteria for selection was drawn up by each country team to ensure the potential for inclusion of groups identified by the study (children perceived as unclean, menstruating girls and children affected by communicable diseases). Some sites were also selected where there was strong likelihood of evidence of best practice related to inclusion and water and sanitation being present.

### Stage 2: Collection of data

This stage formed the most significant part of the research. It focused on investigating practices related to water and sanitation and inclusion in the selected schools and their related communities (together referred to as the research site). Three days were spent at each site: Day 1 at the primary school, Day 2 at the secondary school and Day 3 with the community, with slight variations by country due to school holidays and availability of community members. At each site the researchers collected both quantitative and qualitative data as follows:

1. **Quantitative data** related to facilities and their use and enrolment/drop-out/attendance figures were collected by reviewing written documentation including registers and information on school notice boards and through discussion with headteachers and others responsible for record keeping.

2. **Qualitative data** were collected through focus group discussions, interviews, games and observation with a wide variety of groups from both within the schools and within the wider community. The major groups included in every country included:

- ▶ Children from Classes 3 and 5 in school with a bias towards the Class 5 children since it was found that the older children could give more reliable accounts and more detailed information
- ▶ Adolescent girls/boys in school in separate gender groups
- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Headteachers
- ▶ Community members/parents of children both in and out of school with separate groups of women
- ▶ Adolescent girls/boys out of school (in the community) in separate gender groups.

In addition to these core groups a number of other respondents specific to each country were included, such as the heads of villages/areas (e.g. the Pradan in India and the Gup in Bhutan).

The main **research tools** used were focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews. Each country developed their own tools which were reviewed and revised by the lead researcher. Hence similar tools were used in all four countries which ensured consistency of data collection. There was a strong emphasis placed on encouraging respondents to talk through the use of open-ended questions. This approach encouraged the telling of stories and resulted in valuable quotations and rich data being collected. Researchers worked in pairs with one leading the questioning and the other writing down all the details to ensure the capture of stories and quotations.

For children, and in some cases adolescents, games and role play were used to put them at ease. Again this resulted in children opening up and revealing the 'real' situation. This approach gave some valuable insights into the way other children and teachers behave towards children from more marginalized groups.

Each evening the research team met together to share findings and review the emergence of themes, particularly issues related to key groups identified in the Terms of Reference. They also identified areas where improvements could be made to the data collection process and gaps where further probing was needed. Stories and quotations for inclusion in the final report were also captured through this process.

### **Stage 3: Analysis and Reporting**

**Analys** is began in the field at the review meetings at the end of each day. However, the main analysis was carried out after all the data had been collected. All four countries followed a similar process to ensure consistency. This included:

1. The reading through of scripts transcribed from the field notes and identification of themes - both those from the ToRs and additional emerging themes.
2. Coding the scripts using highlighters to identify specific references to each theme.
3. Identification of key points, quotations and stories related to each theme.
4. Consideration of recommendations related to themes.

Two **reports** were submitted by each country team:

1. An Interim Report comprising the first three chapters of the main report – Introduction, Context and Methodology – together with the set of research tools. This report and the research tools were reviewed by UNICEF ROSA and the lead researcher and suggestions made for improvements and to ensure consistency across countries.
2. A Final Report, comprising five chapters – Introduction, Context, Methodology, Findings and Analysis and Conclusions and Recommendations – was then presented to UNICEF ROSA.

# 2

## ANNEX

# Further Good Practice Case Studies

## Nepal

### Bhanu Secondary School, Bandipur-3, Tanahu

Child clubs are active in this school. In the child clubs, girls collect money for buying sanitary pads, which they keep in the school. Therefore, in cases of need they do not need to rush elsewhere for safety measures.

When the researchers asked, 'What do you do in case of menstruation in the school?', the girls replied, 'We are already prepared for this.' When we asked, 'What facilities do you have for the safety measures?', they said, 'Our child club has collected money, and using the money the club has purchased sanitary pads. We have a separate toilet for girls with water facility; and in the case of menstruation, we can wash and dry our panties in the toilet.'

When the girls who have not yet faced the problem of menstruation were asked, 'What will you do if you meet with the event of menstruation in the school for the first time?', the girls said, 'Our teacher gives us the necessary guidance in case of such incidents. We also have learned how to manage the situation from our seniors.'

The school also has a good toilet and sufficient water facility for sanitation. This has helped to maintain a neat and clean environment in and around the school. Some children have had basic training on health and sanitation, and others have learned the hygienic practices from them.

## India

MS1 is now a Nirmal Gram located in Rajgarh block of Mirzapur district. A tour of the village presents an overall positive picture encompassing closed drains, well-used garbage bins, hand pumps with platforms and proper drainage for waste water, enclosed bathing shelters for women, public urinals for men and clean, litter-free village roads. The primary school has child friendly, functional and clean toilets for both boys and girls (including for pre-school children).

However, a few years ago MS1 was different. There was no system for garbage disposal in the village, including there being no system for disposal of sanitary napkins/rags, which were buried in fields by girls and women. Even the primary and upper primary schools were not the same, both in terms of school infrastructure and practices three years ago. With no proper WATSAN facilities, both the schools were not properly maintained. Earlier, there was a clear discrimination in the seating arrangements between OBC and SC children in the school. Further, monitoring of sanitary practices in the village was not as meticulous as it is today.

The community gives the credit for these changes in the school as well as in the village environment to the current lady pradhan's husband, referred to locally as the Pradhan Patim, who represents her and plays an active role in village governance with a special commitment to sanitation and village development.

With joint efforts of the pradhan, the government-appointed sanitation motivator and members of the village community, all the habitations are now clean and devoid of garbage, the usual litter, and cattle excreta. A paid sweeper comes once a week to clear the bins, pile the garbage into a dump and burn it. The community is fully aware of sanitation related issues in the village, and also supports school sanitation. Sanitation practices and toilet usage are being monitored by the village committee, the pradhan, the women's self-help group (SHG), the children and vigilant youth. Sanitation is an important issue in the village; it is regularly included in Panchayat discussions. The villagers are averse to defecation in the open and monitor this closely in the night or early morning, using torches and whistles. The youth are particularly active in this regard.

The toilets in the schools are clean and well used and the children appeared to be habituated to using and cleaning them. Toilet usage and cleaning habits of the children were also evident in the homes during the village visits. In the primary school the water facility was through a force lift hand pump that supplied clean potable water to washbasins with taps for hand washing. The drain from the hand pump platform is linked to the covered drain of the village. There is a garbage bin at the rear end of the school in which the children put in the daily garbage, which is cleaned by the sweeper every week. A submersible electrical pump is also linked to hand pump pipes.

Children were seen to be washing their hands with soap after using the toilet, before the midday meal and after cleaning the campus. School children teach this to their younger siblings and parents too. They have a committee that organizes the midday meal, including supervision of seating arrangements and cleaning up after the meal. No gender/caste-based segregation is visible in classroom practices or between the haves and have-nots. Children know about scabies and keep their affected classmates segregated. They are also aware of various sources of potable water, the difference between clean and dirty water, harmful effects of using dirty water and the benefits of using toilets, etc.

This village has been able to sustain its practices for sanitation and hygiene in the community and the school due to awareness, education and the involvement of community members in the effort. The school and the children have no doubt been the pivot of learning, but the positives have been transferred to their homes and the community. Apart from this, facilitative infrastructure like drains, garbage bins, roads and water availability, and appointment of a sweeper in the village, have also contributed to making a difference.

Along with the services, the demography of the village too has been a crucial factor impacting upon the effectiveness of the efforts made. With only two major caste groups living in the village, there is evidently not much social conflict. The agency of the pradhan has been critical in making people aware and educated about sanitation and for providing the infrastructure and spending funds allocated for its construction and maintenance. The best advocacy for this village is provided by a young man who does wall paintings not only in this village but also in other villages of the block. He advises people to come to his village to see the positive impact of total sanitation: '*Hamare gaon me aao aur dekho* (come and see our village).'

## **Bhutan**

### **Where there is a will, there is a way**

Chengmari Community Primary School (CPS), situated at a distance of 10 km on the Samtse-Tendu feeder road, is an old school built in 1964. Total student enrolment in 2009 was 574 with 277 girls and 297 boys. Ten female and thirteen male teachers, including the principal, formed the total strength of teaching staff. Mr Sangay Dorji was the principal in 2009 and he has been serving the school for the last five years.

The school had a piped water supply scheme, which was also shared with the Chengmari community. Both the school and the community faced a severe problem of water shortage. Several complaints were lodged to the Geog and the Dzongkhag, but to no avail. The school would be lucky if the water trickling

from their piped scheme could, in one day, fill their 1,000 litre capacity syntax tank installed near the office. The school depended on the good will of the private neighbour from where they met most of their daily water needs. While the school had good toilet facilities, teachers had none and had to depend again on their good relations with the nearby private residents for their sanitation needs. However, the principal and his team of teachers and students were not deterred by poor facilities but instead were motivated to do something more than just teaching.

In 2008, the school initiated compulsory co-curricular activities for students from Classes III to VI to promote wholesome education, which included improving the hygiene situation in the school. The activities were for 45 minutes duration every day after the class. They selected themes on sports, culture, art, health and hygiene, literature, etc. and organized the students into groups, based on their interest. Teachers were also assigned to different groups to work with the students.

The group on Health and Hygiene worked on promoting and ensuring cleanliness of the school campus. In order to share the responsibility and accountability among the group members, they divided the school campus into six zones, assigning a sub-group with a captain to supervise a zone. The activities that this group undertook comprised:

- ▶ management of wastes such as paper, plastics, bottles, etc.
- ▶ maintaining cleanliness of the toilets
- ▶ setting examples to the rest of the students on hygiene practices.

The group framed rules that disallowed both students and teachers from bringing plastics and bottles to the school. They also introduced separate disposal pits and bins to segregate the wastes. The teachers assigned and the group members were required to pick up waste deliberately in front of the smaller students and throw it into their designated pits or bins to set examples.

Because of the zoning, the students exhibited good sense of ownership and took active part with stiff competition among different zones. This ensured self-monitoring and no teachers were required to go after students to discipline them on littering and cleanliness. The principal and the teachers reported that, after this initiative, the cleanliness of the school campus improved significantly. The students also had the opportunity to plan and implement their own plans. The principal said that education is not only about books, but also inculcating values such as health and hygiene. He added that it was a big success for other themes too. At the time of the field visit, the academic session had just begun and the school was in the process of finalizing their annual programme.

## **The School-Based Parents Education and Awareness (SPEA) Initiative**

(A Review of the SPEA Programme, DYS, MoE, April 2007)

The SPEA initiative was started by the Department of Youth and Sports (DYS) as a pilot project in a few selected schools, with the main objectives of raising parents' awareness on issues and problems facing today's adolescents and youth and enhancing their capacity to address the special needs of these groups. The main subjects dealt with in the programme were substance abuse, STDs/HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, romantic relationships and growing up (physical and psychological changes).

Implementation started in a phased manner, and after five years the programme was active in 76 schools in 15 Dzongkhags. Before expanding further, DYS decided to review the programme to assess how the programme contents were perceived and impacted parents, students and teachers. The review exercise was also aimed at providing feedback for improvement and on sustainability of the programme.

The programme review covered 64% (49 schools) of the schools where the SPEA programme was introduced, comprising 122 parents, 371 students, 47 headteachers and 66 focal teachers. 66% of the

focal teachers and 36% of the headteachers identified heavy additional responsibility and demand on teachers' time as the major problems. Non-cooperation from the parents to attend SPEA also featured highly (73% by focal teachers and 47% by headteachers) as one of the constraints faced during implementation. However, from the sample parents who attended the programme, 95% stated their appreciation for the topics. Only a small percentage (2%) stated that they had discomfort on the topics pertaining to physical changes and reproductive health. In general, the vast majority of parents expressed gratitude for the education and information on parenting that the programme provided.

The review also noted a number of positive changes in the interaction between parents and their children, as described best by the respondents:

Parents: *I am a father of many children who had no idea of menstrual cycle and other reproductive issues. It helped me a lot.*

*Most parents are not aware of the communication gap with their children. It will help to bridge the information gap between parents and children.*

*Just like me, eyes of other parents can also be opened.*

Students: *After attending SPEA, my parents' behaviour is totally changed. They act so good to us. Before my parents attended SPEA, they used to quarrel in front of us. After attending these sessions, they stopped quarrelling with each other and we are feeling free and happy.*

It has improved communication between me and my parents.

In conclusion, the programme was well received and has had a very positive impact on both parents and children. The DYS aims to further expand and improve the SPEA programme implementation to all schools in Bhutan.

## **School Management Board**

The Principal of Samtse Lower Secondary School had been a teacher some years back in Bjenkha PS, located under Haa Dzongkhag. The school had instituted a School Management Board (SMB) comprising the Gup of Bjenkha village, some Tshogpas, the principal and some teachers. The SMB functioned very efficiently.

The government, through a WFP programme, provided two meals for the students. However, having no boarding facility, it was still a problem for the students who had to walk to school every day from faraway villages. Some students had to walk for hours to reach the school. That affected students' enrolment and also their attendance in the class. The SMB, which worked with full commitment for the welfare of the school, was concerned about the difficulties faced by the students. A boarding facility was thought to be the only solution, but it would be too demanding to request government support as there were many other schools with lesser facilities than Bjenkha PS.

The SMB decided to seek the support of the community to meet one additional daily meal (dinner) and a boarding place. The SMB, after rounds of discussion and debates, managed to convince the community. It was decided that each household would contribute Nu.100 per month. Those households who were poor were exempted from contribution. Six students from poor families were sponsored through the contribution.

According to the principal, while everything went well, they encountered a problem with one of the SMB members who was trying to interfere in internal administrative matters of the school, making it difficult for the school to function. He was later removed by the other SMB members and clearer terms of reference, delineating functions of the SMB and the school authority, were framed. Since then, the Bjenkha PS had been and, he thinks, still is functioning as a full-fledged boarding school – possibly the only school with government-community partnership.





**United Nations Children's Fund**  
**Regional Office for South Asia**  
P. O. Box 5815  
Lekhnath Marg  
Kathmandu, Nepal

Telephone: 977-1-4417082  
Facsimile 977-1-4418466 / 4419479  
[www.unicef.org/rosa](http://www.unicef.org/rosa)