

# Awareness of Health, Hygiene, and Sanitation among the Elementary School Teachers and Students: A Post Covid Status Survey

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## Abstract

World-wide hundreds of millions of people have passed through and are still passing through the detrimental effects of Covid-19 pandemic. The outbreak of Covid-19 has taught us how dangerous squalid living conditions are for human life as they can kill, make us sick and make our lives miserable. Better healthcare can treat the symptoms but not be the cause of ill health. Personal hygiene and sanitation is recognized as the number-one way by which people can lower the risks of many diseases. School is the place where children spend most of their time and have a chance to learn about health, hygiene and sanitation. Whatever children learn in school, they directly impart in their families and possibly will disseminate in their upcoming generation as well. Here the roles of the teachers are central as their level of mindfulness will certainly determine the level of alertness amongst students. The study discussed through this research paper assessed the level awareness regarding health, hygiene and sanitation among the elementary teachers and students of three different boards i.e., CBSE, ICSE, U.P. of Lucknow city, post Covid-19 reopening of schools. The main intention behind this study was to gather the information, whether or not we have taken any lesson after the peril. It was a descriptive study involving a purposive sample of 09 teachers and 90 students. Results highlighted that our current citizens are not at all prepared to fight against any health-related risk outbreak even post Covid-19.

**Keywords:** Health, Hygiene, Sanitation, elementary schools.

## Introduction

Covid-19 is still there. There isn't any single day when the world is not registering new cases and deaths. As per WHO (2022), COVID-19 is the disease caused by a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. WHO first learned of this new virus on 31 December 2019. WHO (2022), globally, as of 5 May 2022, 6:37pm CEST, there have been 513,384,685 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,246,828 deaths. Safe and effective vaccines are a game-changing

tool: but for the foreseeable future we must keep wearing masks, cleaning our hands, guaranteeing good ventilation indoors, physical distancing and avoiding crowds.

## Schools

School is a place which not only provides education to children but also a learning environment. After stepping out from the house, it plays a crucial role in the development of a child. Schools have a central role in the community, whatever children

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learn here they apply it in their lives and transfer it to each one they come in contact with, like parents, siblings, and neighbours. Here the responsibility of the school increases as they are directly responsible for bringing out the desirable changes. During the Covid 19 outbreak, schools remained closed for a significant period, and a lot of academic loss has been registered. While we are recording new cases, we can't keep schools closed forever. So schools all over the world have started opening, keeping in mind a new model of education. A decision to reopen schools in every country and area has been made based on careful assessment of the situation, with consensus among all the key parties involved, including the health and education policy-makers, teachers and other school staff, parents and health and community workers. In addition, reopening of schools is carefully planned and prepared, with all necessary measures in place to protect the safety and health of everyone in the school community.

As per WHO (2022), areas where SARS-CoV-2 is spreading, children aged between 6-11 years are suggested to wear a well-fitted mask. A safe environment should be shaped for children who are not able to wear mask due to some reason or the other. There are certain things which should be kept in priority lists by the school which includes sanitizers, soaps, dustbins for proper disposals of masks, cleanliness around and within the school premises, students and teachers and staff should always follow physical distancing measures, staying at least one metre from another person; performing hand hygiene by washing hands frequently with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub; following good respiratory hygiene by covering mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing; avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth; and avoiding crowded places.

Through this research paper, the researcher has tried to give the real post covid-19 readiness of schools with respect to hygiene and sanitation as per the points mentioned in the above paragraph.

## Significance of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess teachers' and students' post covid-19 knowledge and attitude regarding health, hygiene and sanitation as well as to suggest a road map towards strengthening the current status on other hand.

## Objectives of the Study

To study the status of health, hygiene and sanitation awareness in elementary schools in Lucknow city with reference—

- a) to study the hygiene awareness among teachers and students,
- b) to study the awareness of sanitation among teachers and students.

## Delimitation

Only 03 elementary schools i.e., one each from CBSE board, ICSE board and U.P board was selected for the study.

Only 90 students i.e., 10 students each from Classes VI, VII and VIII, from each board have been taken for the study.

Only 9 teachers i.e., 3 from each board have been taken for the study.

## Methodology

As the researchers seek detailed description of existing condition and status of hygiene and sanitation conditions in elementary schools, Descriptive method was used in the study.

## Population

As the study was delimited to CBSE, ICSE, U.P Board—all the students studying in the elementary schools of CBSE board, ICSE board, U.P board and all the teachers teaching in the elementary schools of CBSE board, ICSE board, U.P board was the population of the study. The schools of urban Lucknow i.e. population of Lucknow city was selected, as it was expected that students of city get more exposed of towards various health, hygiene and sanitation related schemes,

drives and awareness programmes. Also, it is anticipated that teachers and parents of students of urban area would carry more sensitivity, mindfulness and alertness as they know that various options of several resources are available which are helpful in maintaining health, hygiene and sanitation condition.

## Sample

Keeping in mind the syllabus, curriculum, content in books, surrounding, socio-economic background, parent's qualification and administration of all the three boards' schools are different which in return make teachers to transact different information, facts and figures amongst the students. So the researcher found it important to include all the three boards in the study. Only 90 students i.e. 30 (10 from Class VI, 10 from Class VII and 10 from Class VIII) from each school and only 09 teachers (three from each school) have been taken for the study.

## Sampling

Purposive sampling method was used for selecting the school as the researcher was interested in linking the effect of family background (parents qualification, socio-economic background) and school background (boards, private school/government school) on health, hygiene and sanitation condition. Simple random sampling has been adopted for selecting the students of Classes VI, VII, VIII. Specifically Classes VI, VII, and VIII were selected as students of these classes. They have by now reached at the understanding level; they don't merely work based on the rote memorisation or being directed by others.

## Tools

*Swacch Vidyalaya* initiative (2014) assessed that over 410,000 toilets would need to be constructed or repaired to ensure that every child has access to toilet. Vivas, A. (2011) conducted a study, where he found knowledge of proper hygiene were more likely to have

clean cloths, clean nails, time to time hand washing, garbage in bin and to have lower risk of parasitic infection. This cross-sectional study comprised of 669 students who were interviewed by trained staff. Participants were in Grades 1-6 at Angolela Primary School, located in rural Ethiopia. Data consisted of hygiene and hand washing practices, knowledge about sanitation, personal hygiene characteristics, and presence of gastrointestinal parasitic infection. Hutton, G. & Chase (2016) conducted the study on the knowledge base for achieving the sustainable development goal target on water supply, drinking water, sanitation of surrounding, impact of poor WASH and covering health, social, environmental and economic aspects, costs and socioeconomic returns. Srivastav, S. (2013) reviewed various government programs like *Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan*, *Nirmal Bharat Abhiyaan*, school sanitation and hygiene education program.

As the researcher had to collect data keeping in mind the post-Covid-19 condition of teachers and students, she was unable to find any relevant tools. The researcher herself developed the questionnaire, SWOC sheet and observation sheet. Due to the unavailability of any post-Covid-19 tools, only the content validity of the questionnaire was done.

### 1. Questionnaire for the collection of data from the students.

Development of the questionnaire: The Researcher selected three dimensions i.e. health, hygiene and sanitation. Initially 50 questions were framed, almost equal in number for each dimension.

Content validity of the questionnaire was done with the help five experts. Only 36 questions were left after removing some of the items and improving the language. A few questions were added as well as per the suggestions of the experts

**Scoring:** All the 36 questions were compulsory. Answer was in "YES" and "NO". One mark was awarded for every correct answer. Personal profile, list of instructions were given on the front page.

## 2. SWOC sheet for the collection of data from teachers: A teacher response sheet was made for the introspection and reflection on the basis of four aspects where:

“S” stands for “Strengths” i.e. unique capabilities and means in regard with Health, Hygiene and Sanitation.

“W” stands for “Weaknesses” i.e. weakness in terms of Health, Hygiene and Sanitation.

“O” Stands for “opportunities” i.e. conditions may positively impact in relation with Health, Hygiene and Sanitation.

“C” stands for “Challenges” i.e. what

conditions may negatively impact in terms of Health, Hygiene and Sanitation.

## 3. Observation sheet: to be filled by the researcher.

An observation sheet consisting of 10 checklist items based on the three dimensions, i.e., health, hygiene, sanitation was filled by the researcher. On the basis of the researcher’s critical observation, YES or No was marked on the sheet.

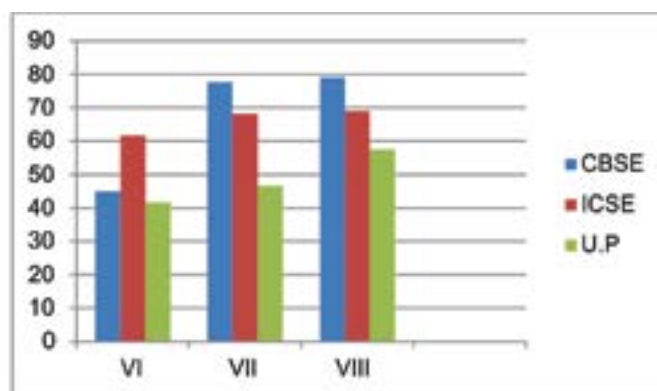
## Interpretation of the Score

Interpretation of the scores according to the responses given by the subject.

**Table 1: Student’s response in percentage.**

Name of the Board	Class	Health	Hygiene	Sanitation
CBSE	VI	38.8	45.0	71.6
CBSE	VII	39.0	77.7	73.3
CBSE	VIII	40.8	79.0	75.0
ICSE	VI	45.0	61.6	55.0
ICSE	VII	64.0	69.0	59.0
ICSE	VIII	63.0	68.2	61.0
U.P	VI	25.8	41.6	55.0
U.P	VII	35.8	46.1	50.0
U.P	VIII	35.8	57.5	57.5

## Awareness of Hygiene among the students of same class level of different schools



**Figure 1: Comparisons of hygiene-level related awareness amongst the students of Classes VI, VII, VIII of CBSE, ICSE, and U.P. board students.**

Considering the graph it is found that the awareness level of CBSE and ICSE board students were better. In both the schools teachers were paying attention towards washing hands before eating, regular sensitization of hands, not rubbing hands around nose, sneezing and coughing with covering nose. It has been found in these two schools student-teacher ratio was appropriate, so the teachers were not over-burdened with work. Also, students were coming from good socio-economic

background which is allowing them to understand and follow things easily.

U.P board school was a government school, teachers were overburdened with work, and they were not able to give much time on talking and reflecting about the importance of hygiene. Also students from lower middle strata of the society do come to this school, their family members are not literate and particularly have poor knowledge about the personal hygiene.

### Awareness of sanitation among the students of same level of classes of different schools

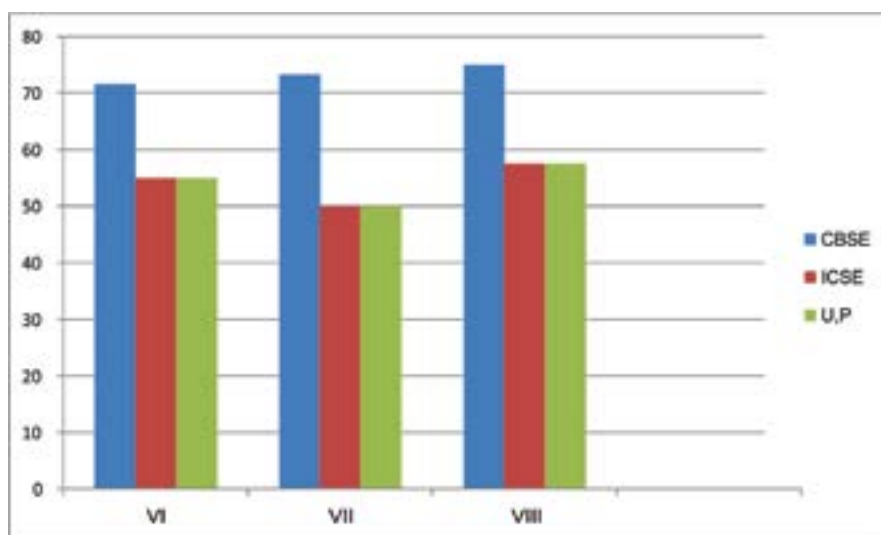


Figure 2: Comparisons of level sanitation-related awareness amongst the students of class VI, VII, VIII of CBSE, ICSE, U.P board students.

When it comes to comparing the same classes of different schools, it was found that CBSE board school students keeps good and updated knowledge regarding sanitation conditions. CBSE board school (is being run by Army welfare educational society), which is equipped with all the necessary equipment's required for keeping the campus clean like a good number of dustbins with lids and wheels are kept. When it comes to ICSE board school, though it is a famous

private school, situated in the main Lucknow city, in congested space, sanitation conditions in the school were not at par. In U.P board, the school condition was poor: dustbins were broken, dingy toilets, and taps were not in working condition and algae was blooming in the toilet and walls of the class room.

In all the three schools no soaps dispensers, no sanitizer were kept anywhere.

## Based on the SWOC Results

### *Teacher's awareness regarding health, hygiene and sanitation in*

**CBSE Board Schools** Teachers have mentioned points like availability of clean drinking water, well-furnished toilets, regular sweeping of class rooms as the strength of school.

Water stagnation near the parking area and irregularity in drinking water supply as the weakness in school campus. Stagnation of water can cause the breeding of mosquitos and irregular water supply may lead to many unhygienic situations. These points show that teachers are well aware of elements required for health, hygiene and sanitation condition. But none of them mentioned any innovative method of teaching which is helpful in developing these values which will be required fighting battle against breakthrough like Covid 19.

**ICSE Board Schools** Dustbin with lids in wash room, soap dispensers in washrooms, regular cleanliness of toiles, functional aqua guard water coolers and hygienic check on daily basis were points given as strength of the school. But the ground reality was different; in observation by the researcher many things mentioned by the teachers were not in the working conditions.

Frequently irregular supply of water, irregularity in cleaning dustbins, less emphasis on water cooler cleaning were the weakness of ICSE board school.

Availability of lots of junk food and poor maintenance of canteen were the challenges mentioned by teachers.

None of them provided any information regarding the things which can help in fighting against Covid 19.

### **U.P Board Schools**

Out of all the three teachers' one could not write any relevant point in the sheet, which shows her own lack of awareness on the topic.

Other teachers mentioned the big ventilated class rooms as the strength.

Unavailability of proper hand washing facilities near the wash room, poor maintenance of toilets as the weakness.

Again nothing specifically was mentioned for Covid-19 prevention.

### **Researcher in her observation found that: CBSE board schools**

Had separate toilets for boys and girls.

Proper attention for cleanliness of toilets was given.

Separate dustbin for sanitary napkins was present in girl's toilet.

Taps were in working condition, but no soap dispenser was there.

Nothing was dedicated on the name of preventing covid-19 spread.

### **ICSE Board Schools**

Had separate toilets for boys and girls.

Sufficient number of taps were present but water was not coming from every points

Soap dispensers without soaps were kept there.

### **U.P Board Schools**

Had toilets without doors

No proper water supply

No separate toilet for boys and girls even the staff members were sharing the same toilet

No dustbins were present, not in the toilet and not in the school premises as well

Taps were broken and leaking

Water supply wasn't proper; no provision of keeping soap or hand wash was present.

**Findings** Only 49.2 per cent of Class VI, 64.2 per cent of Class VII, and 68.2 per cent of Class VIII students of all the three schools acquired awareness regarding hygiene at elementary level which is insupportable, and only 60.5 per cent of Class VI, 60.7 per cent of Class VII, and 64.5 per cent of Class VIII students of all the three boards

acquired awareness regarding sanitation at elementary level, but many of those who do have knowledge about various diseases and disease causing agents are not practicing hygiene and sanitation.

88.96 per cent of students have mentioned their fondness for junk foods over healthy food items, which in return may weaken their immunity and lead towards obesity and many life threatening disease.

Only 19.23 per cent of students of all the three boards practice yoga; it was observed on ground that many of the students were over-weight and obese.

7 out of 9 teachers mentioned they were overburdened with tasks other than academics, which in turn mount pressure of course completion within a very short period of time. More emphasis is being given on the preparation of the facts for examination but not on acquiring useful knowledge and skills. Teachers are not getting appropriate time to establish link between health, hygiene and sanitation.

37 per cent of students whose both parents were working acquire good knowledge regarding healthcare. Students who have good socio-economic background, practice hygienic habits and are more aware regarding sanitation practices and students who do come from lower economic strata have less knowledge regarding health, hygiene and sanitation.

CBSE and ICSE School had facilities regarding hygiene and sanitation but U.P board's schools were in pathetic condition in terms of basic cleanliness and facilities.

Study indicates that in all the three schools, students and teachers were not aware of various health, hygiene and sanitation programmes being run by the government.

## Suggestions

NCERT has recommended "Health, Yoga and Physical Education" paper in Semester IV of B.Ed. Programme. Every university across the country should include this paper

while designing syllabus for B.Ed. so that pre-service teachers can inculcate a sense of importance of linking and disseminating information on Health, Hygiene and sanitation amongst students and society.

**Suggestions for Students** Students should apply various health, hygiene and sanitation concepts in real life.

They should wash their hands before eating food, after using toilets and touching animals.

They should carry homemade food and water bottles, avoid junk food.

They should carry and use their own sanitizer.

They should flush toilets after using it in school, home and public places.

They should use dustbins for proper disposal of waste.

They should discuss various concepts they have learnt in school with their family members.

They should sneeze or cough with their mouth covered.

They should refrain from coming to school or going out to public places in case they develop symptoms for Covid or any other communicable disease.

They should learn their social responsibility.

**Suggestions for School There should be activities related to health like yoga, sports, and exercises for students as well as teachers.**

- Sufficient, accessible, private, secure, clean and culturally appropriate toilets should be provided for school children and staff.
- Sufficient water supply should be available at all time for drinking and personal hygiene, cleaning when required.
- Guidelines should be placed appropriately and should be followed daily by students, teachers and other staff members.

- Proper arrangements should be made for providing primary care, in case someone develops symptoms while in the school premises, at the same time controlling the spread of it to others.

**Suggestions for teachers Teachers should plan and organize co-curricular activities related to health, hygiene and sanitation and should ensure maximum participation.**

- Teachers should take sessions for parents to make them aware of healthy and hygienic habits.
- In-service training for teachers

should be provided for updating them with changing scenario.

- Teachers should be vigilant to spot children showing any sign of the disease.
- Teachers should make sure that students are adhering to the various guidelines regarding personal grooming, hygiene and sanitation.

## Conclusion

A lot of changes are required at the school level in order to spread awareness among the teachers and students otherwise wave after wave of disease like Covid 19 will keep on coming, and we will leave with no option, except of losing lives of our dear and near ones.

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