



## Project Aspiration

### Status of Sanitation in Schools functioning in Rameswaram an analysis by



## Gandhigram Trust

Ramanathapuram district is one among the two Aspiration districts in Tamil Nadu categorized by NITI Ayog. Gandhigram Trust has started a project entitled, “Promoting Sustainability of WASH Facilities and Child Centred Governance in the Schools of Rameswaram”. The project is funded by NSE Foundation, Mumbai. It is a part of ASPIRATION Consortium comprising of seven other projects implemented by different NGOs. NSE Foundation has entered into a Statement and Intent with the Ramanathapuram district administration. The District Collector of Ramanathapuram is the Chairperson of all the NSE Foundation sponsored projects in Ramanathapuram district.



*Vedalai Hr.Sec.School – interaction with the authorities*

Ensuring clean and disease free environment in 37 schools functioning in the Island, promoting desired sanitation behaviours among the school going children, building capacity of stakeholders on sanitation and hygiene and supporting the district administration to achieve

open defecation free island are the project objectives. The project comprises of two major components namely retrofitting WASH infrastructure facilities in the schools (hard variable) and Behavioural Change Communication on sanitation and hygiene (soft variable).

The project, in consultation with the school education department, has identified 37 government run schools for interventions. As a part of inception activities of the project, Gandhigram Trust prepared Detailed Project Reports on WASH in all the identified schools. This report in addition to guiding the team to make specific interventions as a micro-planning tool will also act a baseline on outcome indicators.

A data collection format was developed and field tested for finalization. Approval from the Chief Education Officer (CEO), Ramanathapuram District was obtained to execute the activity in the schools. Data were collected through review of records maintained in the schools, observation of the WASH infrastructure facilities and interacting with staff of the schools, students, members of the school management committee and parent teachers' associations.

Key findings of the study are as follows

1. As many as 6,025 students were studying the 37 government schools in Rameswaram Island, including 53 children with special needs.



*Engineer of Gandhigram Trust interacting with the school authorities*

2. Student to toilet ratio in the schools was 32:1 against the state level standard of 40:1, which shows that the students had a better access to sanitation facilities.
3. However, 12 schools were with the student to toilet ratio more than the prescribed standard.
4. All the schools had toilets for girl students. However, in 11 schools, the girl student toilet ratio was more than the standard.
5. Out of total 187 toilets available in the schools, 165 structures were functional and remaining 22 were required retrofitting.
6. Out of 96 urinals available, 11 structures required retrofitting.
7. Only 17 schools out of the total 37 had toilet specially built for the children with special needs.
8. As many as 15 schools had functional RO water processing facility to provide safe drinking water to the children.
9. While 32 schools had at least one source of drinking water within in the premises, the other five schools had no water sources within the school premises.
10. Only four schools had functional rainwater recharge structure. None of the school had rainwater harvesting structure
11. Out of 37 total schools in the Island, 30 schools had hand washing facility (either tap or handwashing station). In the remaining seven schools handwashing facility was not available and the students were observed to fetch water from bucket for washing their hands.
12. None of schools maintained compost pit to decompose solid waste including kitchen waste and paper waste generated from the school premises.
13. Out of the total schools, 14 were of middle school and above category. Of these 14, in 13 schools, adolescent girls were enrolled. Only three, out of these 13 schools had manually operated incinerator facility. However, all these three incinerator facilities were not functional.
14. In 28 schools, grey water generated from the school was left to open. In seven schools, the grey water was fed to arrow root (*Canna indica*) plants. Soak pit facility was in use in one school and in the remaining one school, the grey water was disposed to the open drainage facility provided by the Municipality.

The project, taking the above facts into consideration, has worked out specific interventions to ensure availability of required WASH infrastructure facilities in the schools.

