

# Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Among Government School Students Towards Personal Hygiene

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## ABSTRACT

### Article Info

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The present study entitled “Knowledge, attitude and practices among school students towards personal hygiene” was conducted with an aim to assess the knowledge of students towards personal hygiene; to assess the attitude of students towards personal hygiene; to examine the practice of personal hygiene in the individual levels and to intervene them about personal hygiene. The sample of the present research consisted of 100 students in the age group of 8-10 years. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Questionnaire was used to gather the required information. Data was collected from the selected schools of Gurgaon. Results reveal that there is a significant association between personal hygiene practices and health as it has been found that children who maintain hygiene practices are comparatively better than those who are not practicing personal hygiene. Failure to keep up a standard of hygiene can have many implications.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

*“Hygiene is derived from “hygeia” - the goddess of health in Greek mythology”*

India is one of the largest developing countries in the world, it contributes 15% of the school going children. The future of nation rest on the children’s hand, who become future citizens and leaders tomorrow. Care of the child is not only vital itself, but it is most

important aspects of the health of the country, SAARC.

It is defined as the science of health and clinches all factors which contribute to healthful living. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Hygiene refers to surroundings and practices which helps in maintaining health and preventing the diseases. Hygiene issues include personal hygiene, which is very important for all the individuals in order to maintain good well-being

## CONCEPT OF HYGIENE

Hygiene is very old concept related to medicine, as well as to peculiar and specialised care practices related to most aspects of living. During the manufacturing of food, pharmaceutical, cosmetic and other products, good hygiene is a key part of quality reassurance. It ensures that the product conforms with microbial specifications appropriate to its use. In other words, hygiene refers to practices that prevent spread of disease-initiating viruses. Cleaning processes (e.g., hand washing) remove not only communicable bacteria but also dirt and soil, which are often the means to achieve hygiene. Body hygiene, personal hygiene, sleep hygiene, mental hygiene, dental hygiene, and occupational hygiene are the terms used in connection with public health. Hygiene is another name of a branch of science that deals with the advancement and protection of health, also called hygienic. Hygiene practices vary widely as what is considered suitable in one culture might not be adequate in another.

## IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL HYGIENE PRACTICES

Hygiene is a personal matter. Correct promotion of these habits has a direct impression on a person's future health. Hygiene manners includes hand hygiene, personal care, home hygiene and food hygiene. Individual hygiene activities can be affected by many factors, including beliefs, values, habits, socio-economic and cultural factors, level of knowledge Personal inclinations, family features and physical and social appearances of the work and living environments. Therefore, the hygiene customs of individual differ from one another, i.e. these habits are exclusive to individuals.

In order to maintain good health, personal hygiene should be there. Personal hygiene is referred to as personal care which includes all of the following: Bathing and Showering, Hair care, Nail care, Foot care, Genital care, Dental care. Personal hygiene means to keep the body clean, and helps prevent the spread of germs.

In order to sustain health, following areas need to be covered: Nutrition, Leisure/recreation opportunities, sleep, and exercise. Not only this we should also maintain personal hygiene as it is necessary for many reasons; these can be personal, social, for health reasons, psychological or simply as a way of life. Keeping a good customary of hygiene helps in averting the development and binge of infections, illnesses and bad odours.

**PERSONAL HYGIENE:** The main aim of personal purity is to endorse values of personal cleanliness with in the settings of the condition where people live. Good sanitation leads to good health, beauty, comfort and social relations. Good personal hygiene, directly aids in disease avoidance and health elevation, ICDS.

Children are enthusiastic to learn and schools are important places of learning for children. Advancement of personal hygiene and sanitation in schools therefore help the students to receive good sanitation and habits during their childhood. Children learn in school which they sometimes don't learn or grab from their families and communities.

## CONSEQUENCES OF POOR PERSONAL HYGIENE

Corrupt personal cleanliness may damage a child's health in various ways. Unclean kids are more susceptible to illness as cold, fever, diarrhoea, flu etc. due to extreme acquaintance to germs either carried by itself or others. Cavities and gum diseases are

caused by mistreated oral hygiene and can lead to premature loss of teeth.

## II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are many motives for preserving personal: these can be personal, social, for health reasons, mental or simply as a way of life. There is need to evaluate the personal hygiene Knowledge, attitude and practices of this target group because they are more likely to engage in practices than may be hostile to their health and thus make them vulnerable to hygiene deficiency illness. Keeping good hygiene ethics helps to prevent the growth and spread of infections, illness and bad odour. This study is expected to provide important information to better understand the importance of personal hygiene. In addition, this study will contribute to school students' health by making awareness about the bad effects of poor personal hygiene and reduce the risk associated with poor hygiene practices. The upshot of this study will serve as a controller for upcoming research in this area.

## OBJECTIVES

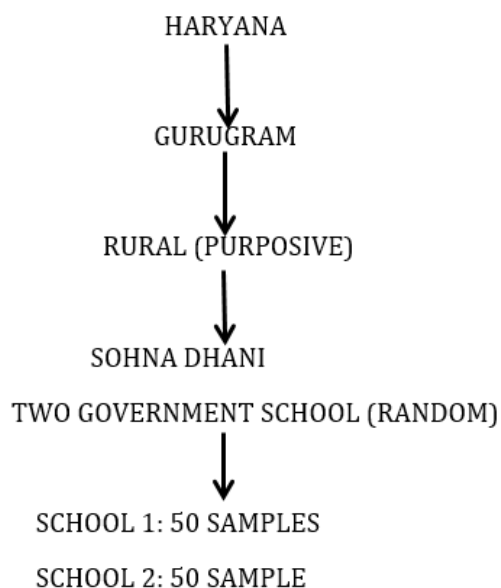
1. To evaluate the knowledge of students towards personal hygiene.
2. To evaluate the attitude of students towards personal hygiene.
3. To examine the practice of personal hygiene in the distinct levels.
4. To intervene them about personal hygiene

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study entitled "Knowledge, attitude and practices among school students towards personal

hygiene" was a purposive random study carried out in rural area of Sohna, Haryana during the period of March 2019 to April 2019.

Permission was obtained from the authority of selected schools. The questionnaire was in English and assistance was provided to the students where needed. Before starting of the study, pre testing of the questionnaire was done and accordingly necessary modifications were made and finalized. The school was visited for 4 days. The class teacher of each grade was explained the purpose of study. Good rapport was built with the students. Briefing was done regarding the questionnaire that was provided to the students.



## LOCALE OF THE STUDY

The present study was conducted in government schools of Sohna, Gurugram. The students in the school were selected randomly keeping in mind the following points

- Willingness to co-operate
- Ease of accessibility by the investigator
- Availability of the target group

## SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

- Sample: students (8-10 years)
- Sample size: 100 students
- Sampling technique: Random sampling technique was used for the selection of sample.

### Criteria for selection:

- School goers of government school should be there.
- Only 8-10 years of students were taken.
- Both boys and girls in selected school.

## TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

1. **Questionnaire:** Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of :
  - **Demographic information:** Name, age, class, gender, mother literacy, father literacy.
  - **Section A:** This include knowledge questions. There were total 16 questions in this section.
  - **Section B:** This include question related to attitude of children towards personal hygiene. There were total 10 questions in this section.
  - **Section C:** This include knowledge questions. There were total 17 questions in this section.
2. **Pretesting:** the questionnaire was finalized after performing a pretest on 15% of the total sample that were then not included in the sample. On the basis of the information collected, necessary modifications were incorporated for the clarity of the required information.

## SCORING

### *Knowledge*

The score was divided into three groups; poor knowledge with a score less than 50% moderate knowledge from 50 % to 75% and good knowledge more than 75%.

### *Attitude*

The score was divided into three groups; negative with a score less than 50%, indifference from 50% to 75% and positive more than 75%.

## DATA COLLECTION

Firstly rapport establishment was done with the sample. The data was collected in the month of March and April, 2019. These questionnaire were handed over to selected students and the purpose of the study was explained to them. The obscurity of the respondent was taken care. On an average time taken for the accomplishment of questionnaire by the respondent was 10-15 minutes. Information was derived as per the suitability of the respondents.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In accordance with the kind of evidence and data collected, data was subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. Categories for analysis were formulated; the responses were coded and tabulated with respect to investigative category. They were investigated according to the objectives of the present study.

## IV. RESULTS

### **Demographic and educational status (n=100)**

Present study comprises of 100 school going children, out of which 27% are in the age range of 8 years, 38% children stand in 9 years age group and remaining 35% children are in 10 years of age group. Among them, 52% were boys and 48% of students were girls. Equal percent i.e. 50% of the students were in grade 4 grade 5. Mothers of 62% of the students were educated and 38% were not educated. 80% of the fathers were educated whereas 20% were not educated.

**Table 1** : Knowledge regarding Personal hygiene (n=100)

PARAMETERS	FREQUENCY
Did you ever heard about the term “hygiene”? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	100 0
What do you mean by hygiene? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleanliness</li> <li>• Maintaining health</li> <li>• Preventing disease</li> <li>• All of the above</li> </ul>	5 15 20 60
Did you ever heard about the term “personal hygiene”? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	100 0
What do you mean by personal hygiene? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleanliness of once body</li> <li>• Overall health</li> <li>• Washing hands</li> <li>• All of the above</li> </ul>	15 0 35 50
From where did you invent the word personal hygiene? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Any other</li> </ul>	18 0 82 0 0 0
Do you know the basic requirements of personal hygiene? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	80 20
Do you know the importance of hand washing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	77 13

Table 1 depicts that 100% of the respondents had heard of the terms “hygiene” and “personal hygiene”. 5% of them perceive hygiene as “cleanliness” while 15% of them view it as” maintaining health” whereas 20% perceive it as “preventing disease”. However majority (60%) of them -believe that hygiene includes all of the

above. 15% of the respondents feels that personal hygiene means “cleanliness of the body”, 35% says that it means “washing hands” but majority (50%) view personal hygiene as all of the above. Parents constituted the largest foundation of evidence about personal sanitation accounting for 82% followed by school i.e.18%. It is evident from the above table that 80% of the respondents were cognizant about the basic necessities of personal hygiene; 77% of the respondents knew the importance of hand washing and feet washing and they explained it well during an informal discussion

1.	Do you think regular cleansing of hair keeps hair healthy and prevents scalp disease? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree</li> <li>• Disagree</li> </ul>	946
2.	Do you think hand washing is a must after each meal? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree</li> <li>• Disagree</li> </ul>	1000

Table 2: Attitude towards personal hygiene (n=100)

3.	Do you think we should cut our nails timely on its growth? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree</li> <li>• Disagree</li> </ul>	1000
4.	Do you think we should immediately change our clothes after coming from school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree</li> <li>• Disagree</li> </ul>	928
5.	Do you think we should share our personal belongings with one another? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree</li> <li>• Disagree</li> </ul>	1090

Table 3 depicts that 89% of the students gave positive response for cleaning ear is part of personal hygiene whereas 11% gave negative respond for the same. 100% of the sample thinks that ear can be cleaned with ear buds. 100% of the students are aware of cleanliness of nails is a part of personal hygiene cleanliness. 95% of them were of the opinion that nail biting is not “hygienic” where just 5% were not aware of it. 100% of the respondents responded positively for personal hygiene embraces regular brushing and flossing of teeth. Majority (94%) of the respondents had information about the personal hygiene includes consistent and correct hand washing and only 6% of them were not fully awake about the same. The percentage of knowledge of respondents about if we do not maintain hygiene it can lead to different health issues is 100%

**Table 3 .**

Do you think that cleaning ear is part of personal hygiene? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	89 11	89 11
How do you think it can be cleaned? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ear buds</li> <li>• Ear drops</li> <li>• Both ear buds and ear drops</li> <li>• Don't know</li> <li>• Any other</li> </ul>	100 0 0 0 0	100 0 0 0 0
Do you think cleanliness of nails is a part of personal hygiene cleanliness? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	100 0	100 0
What is your opinion for those who do nail biting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are hygienic</li> <li>• They are not hygienic</li> <li>• Not aware/don't know</li> </ul>	0 95 5	0 95 5
Does personal hygiene includes consistent brushing and flossing of teeth? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	100 0	100 0
Does personal sanitation includes consistent and proper hand washing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	94 6	94 6
Do you think one should use handkerchief while sneezing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	100 0	100 0
Do you know if we do not maintain hygiene it can lead to different health issues? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	100 0	100 0



**Table 4 : Personal Hygiene Practices (n=100)**

PARAMETERS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
How frequently do you wash your hair?		
<b>BOYS</b>		
<b>During summers</b>		
• Daily	47	47
• Twice a week	5	5
• Once a week	0	0
• Once in 15 days	0	0
• Once a month	0	0
<b>During winters</b>		
• Daily	50	50
• Twice a week	2	2
• Once a week	0	0
• Once in 15 days	0	0
• Once a month	0	0
<b>GIRLS</b>		
<b>During summers</b>		
• Daily		
• Twice a week	29	29
• Once a week	15	15
• Once in 15 days	4	4
• Once a month	0	0
<b>During winters</b>	0	0
• Daily		
• Twice a week	20	20
• Once a week	22	22
• Once in 15 days	6	6
• Once a month	0	0
	0	0
How frequently do you brush your teeth?		
• Once a day	93	93
• Twice a day	7	7
	0	0
Thrice a day		
Do you wash your feet regularly after coming from school?		
• Yes	61	61
• No	30	30
	9	9
Sometimes		
How frequently do you change your clothes?		
<b>During summers</b>		
• Daily	100	100
• Twice a week	0	0

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once a week</li> <li>• Once in 15 days</li> <li>• Once a month</li> </ul>	0	0
During winters		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily</li> <li>• Twice a week</li> <li>• Once a week</li> <li>• Once in 15 days</li> <li>• Once a month</li> </ul>	56	56
	44	44
	0	0
	0	0
	0	0
Do you have your own towel?	36	36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	64	64
How do you wash your hands before and after meals?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soap</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Hand sanitizer</li> <li>• Others</li> </ul>	90	90
	10	10
	0	0
	0	0
Do you cover your face while sneezing and coughing?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	81	81
	19	19

It is evident from the table 4 that 82% of the sample takes “bath daily during summers” while 18% of them takes bath twice a week whereas 57% of them takes bath twice a week during winters while 26% of the respondents takes bath daily and 17% of them takes bath once a week during winters. Parallel remarks were made by **Jayanta Kumar Ghose et al (2012)** **S. Y. Ansari et al (2014)** **Mohammad al Bashtawy et al (2015)** **P. Seenivasan et al (2016)** who stated 75.9%, 81%, 100%, 100% every day bath respectively. It is clear from the above table that majority 47% of the “boys wash their hair” daily during summers and only 5% of them wash their hair once a week for the same whereas 50% of boys wash their hair daily during winters and only 5% of them wash their hair twice a

week. 29% of the “girls wash their hair daily” during summers while 15% of them wash their hair twice a week and only 4% wash their hair once a week during summers whereas during winters majority (20%) of the girls wash their hair daily, 22% of them wash their hair twice a week and only 6% wash their hair once a week. Majority (93%) of the students “brush their teeth” once a day and only 7% of them brush twice a week. 61% of the sample wash their “feet regularly after coming from school”, 30% of them do not wash their feet regularly and 9% of them sometimes practices the same. 100% of the students change their “clothes daily during summers” whereas 56% of them change their “clothes daily during winters” while 44% practice the same during winters.

Majority (64%) of the respondent do not have “own towel” and only 34% of them have separate towel for themselves. 90% of the students “wash their hands with soap before and after meals” and 10% of them use only water to wash their hands for the same. Majority (81%) of the respondents “covered their face while sneezing and coughing” whereas 19% did not cover their face. 65% of the students “change their undergarments” every day, 15% twice a week and 20% every other day for the same. 100% of the sample “cut/trim their nails” weekly. Majority (51%) of the students have personal comb and only 49% did not have their own comb. 100% of them wash their hands after using toilet. 54% of them wash-down their hands with soap before and after meals, 13% wash their hands with soap only before meals and only 33% after meals does the same. 100% of them wash their hands with soap before and after meals and not with tissue. 100% of the students clean their ear. Majority (65%) of the respondent’s ears are cleaned by mother and only 35% of them cleans them on their own. It can be concluded that most of the students had decent practices towards personal cleanliness and only few students had poor practices.

## V. DISCUSSION

The most important characteristic of preserving good health is personal cleanliness or hygiene. Personal hygiene means keeping the body neat and benefits in the prevention of binge of germs. Sustaining good health also includes nutrition, vacation/recreation opportunities, sleep and exercise. Hygiene is a personal stock. Hygiene practices are customarily taught during childhood by parents or teachers, mostly through practicing, need to be continued by the individual after childhood. Accurate acceptance of these habits has a direct influence on a person future health can be affected by many factors including values, beliefs, habits, socio-economic and cultural

factors, level of knowledge, attitude and practice towards personal cleanliness.

This study was done on 100 students of government school in Sohna. In this present research, 52% were male students and 48% were female students. Majority of the mothers (62%) and father (80%) were literate this may be one of the reason that students have good knowledge, positive attitude and good practices towards personal hygiene.

Regarding knowledge of personal hygiene of students it was observed that 100% had heard about hygiene and personal hygiene. 80% have knowledge about basis requirements of personal hygiene, 77% knows the importance of hand washing, 78% knows the importance of feet washing, and 100% of the students have good knowledge towards regular brushing and flossing of teeth. Another study by **M. Sarkar (2013)** stated the percentage of primary school children having correct knowledge on combing hair, studying under adequate light, brushing teeth, washing hands before eating and trimming nails 48.08% vs. 74.04%, 8.65% vs. 40.38%, 50% vs. 65.38%, 84.62% vs. 96.15%, and 76.92% vs. 98.08%, respectively.

The present study revealed that 90% of children with positive attitude and majority of those with good practice had significantly good knowledge towards personal hygiene. Also, **Smyth et al (2007)** reported that sample with strong information indicated better attitude and practice towards hygiene. However, neither the attitude nor the practice variables differed significantly between the strong and weak informative groups. This may be explained by differences in study population and methodology.

It has been observed from the present research that 82% of the respondents take bath every day. Related results were found in the studies by **Jayanta Kumar Ghose et al (2012)**, **S. Y. Ansari et al (2014)** **Mohammad al Bashtawy et al (2015)**. **P. Seenivasan**

et al (2016) who stated 75.9%, 81%, 100%, 100% every day bath respectively. In the Present study it was observed that 93% practice to brush teeth every day. Well in resonance to present study, S.Y. Ansari et al (2014), Dr. B. Suresh et al (2015), Mohammad al Bashtawy et al (2015), and P. Seenivasan et al (2016) reported daily brushing of teeth in 100%.

Students expressed the most positive hygiene behaviour. Hygiene is a personal subject with varying frequency for all however, it is of great importance to wash hands after using bathroom and before eating or touching food. All of students stated that they wash their hands after using bathroom. Which is a pointer of the fact that they have positive behaviour towards this issue. Female students articulated much more positive behaviours about hygiene than male students. Sustaining personal hygiene is necessary for personal, social, for health reasons, psychological or simply as a way of life.

## VI. CONCLUSION

It has been concluded from the present research that there is highly significant association between personal hygiene practices and keep the body healthy among them who maintain hygiene practices than who does not maintain. Failure to maintain standard of hygiene can have many implications. There is an amplified risk of getting an infection or illness, when hygiene is not followed. The information and practice of hygiene is energetic in all our everyday activities in order to bring healthy life.

This study is likely to provide vital evidence to the target group in order to have the better understanding of the importance of hygiene especially personal hygiene. Thus the result of this study will contribute to student's health by making awareness about the bad effects of poor personal hygiene and reduce the risk related with poor hygiene practices.

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