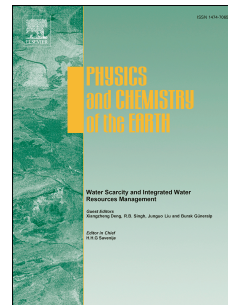


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Access to water and sanitation facilities in primary schools: A neglected educational crisis in Ngamiland sub-district in Botswana

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11 **Abstract**

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13 In developing countries, the sanitation and hygiene provision often receives limited resources compared
14 to the water supply. However, water supply benefits tend to diminish if improved sanitation and hygiene
15 are neglected. This paper presents findings of a situational analysis of water supply, sanitation and
16 hygiene infrastructure and their utilization in three primary schools in north-western Botswana. The
17 overall objective of the paper is to determine access and functionality of water supply, sanitation and
18 hygiene infrastructure in three primary schools. The specific objectives are: a) Learners' perspective of
19 their water and sanitation facilities and b) gendered utilization of sanitation and hygiene facilities. Data
20 were collected through a face-to-face administered social survey tool to 286 learners selected through
21 proportionate stratified random sampling from three purposively selected villages in the middle and lower
22 Okavango Delta. Findings indicate that standpipes provide 96% of potable water supply. However, the
23 majority (65% of learners) indicated that they 'sometimes' experienced water shortage due to
24 dry/nonfunctioning taps/pumps and leaks/wastage. Overall, schools have relatively sufficient sanitation
25 facilities consisting of both water borne toilets and VIP latrines. The major sanitation gap identified was
26 that 80% flush toilets hardly work, while 77% of VIP toilets were in disrepair. Furthermore, poor water
27 supply compromised hand washing with 65.7% learners "always" washing their hands if school
28 standpipes had water, while the majority did not wash hands if standpipes were dry. The study concluded
29 that availability of sanitation infrastructure does not necessarily translate into utilization in the study area
30 due to multiple problems, such as lack of personal hygiene supplies (regular toilet paper and hand
31 washing detergents), privacy issues and recurring water problems. The chronicity of inadequate water,
32 sanitation and hygiene infrastructure in primary schools is critical and there is urgent need to address
33 these challenges in order to create a conducive learning environment in primary schools in the district.

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36 **Keywords:** primary school learners; hand-washing; hygiene; Okavango Delta; sanitation; water.

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