

School guard interprets self-protection as personal hygiene
WASH activities bring behaviour change in school guard

Protection of the school is the prime duty of the guard. Standing firm with self-protection is the perquisite to his or her duty. The guard of KGBV, Mandesra, Bhainsroadgarh, Chittorgarh interprets self-protection as personal hygiene without which he cannot protect his school from intruder or diseases.

Ganesh Garg is a guard deputed at KGBV who adopted personal hygiene measures apart from safeguarding the school. One year back Ganesh was the foul-smelling guy who seldom used to take bath. Thanks to Project Prajwala which through its regular interaction with the girls on WASH focused on behaviour change to adopt personal hygiene. Project Prajwala is a joint initiative of National Stock Exchange Foundation and Rajasthan Elementary Education Council, being implemented by Centre for Environment Education (CEE) as knowledge and implementation partner and UNICEF as technical partner.

Ganesh hardly used to take bath. Other prominent signs of unhygienic practices were uncombed hair, unwashed clothes, and uncut nails. “The reason behind this condition was my laziness”, he said. During the project implementation in the school, the project staffs took thematic sessions on water, sanitation and personal hygiene. He put his ear to the ground as the educational activities went on. He took interest in activity on handwashing which inspired him to wash the hands with soap before and after eating. During his occasional movement in the school courtyard he came across with the poster on personal hygiene, which was provided by CEE. The poster depicts 5 measures on personal hygiene which are regular bath, combing hair, nail cutting, brushing teeth, and washing clothes.

The lessons gained during the interactive sessions inspired him to take regular bath, comb hair, wash the clothes and cut nails. According to the warden, “the guard which never used to bother for personal hygiene has turned into a smart person.”

He says, “I feel very fresh as I take bath daily during morning. My home is not too far. I take bath in my home and join my duty back.” “Personal hygiene keeps us free of germs and protects others from infection. I have changed my behaviour to adopt the practices and have become more vigilant”, he adds.