

Chief Secretary  
49A/C3/S4  
22 MAR 2022  
GOVT OF TAMIL NADU

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

22 MAR 2022

# 'Only 32% of schools have disabled-friendly toilets'

BINITA JAISWAL @Chennai

ONLY 32 per cent of schools in Tamil Nadu have toilets accessible to students with disabilities, according to central data. The figures have alarmed many activists as they believe lack of such toilets is one of the reasons why children with disabilities drop out.

According to Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report, 2020-21, released recently by the Union ministry of education, there are 58,904 schools (including government, aided, and private) in the State. Out of these, only 19,026 schools have toilets for Children with special needs (CWSN).

"These figures give us a reality check. Inclusion still remains a distant reality for most CWSN students in our State. Inaccessible facilities in schools such as drinking water

units, toilets, and transportation pose barriers to the education of CWSN," said TMN Deepak, a disability-rights activist. He said accessibility of barrier free toilets plays an important role in education of CWSN, especially the girl students. "Lack of toilets and other infrastructure adds to the challenges faced by special children. Many parents are forced to pull their daughters out of schools due to lack of proper toilets as they are worried about their safety," said V Sandhya, a social worker.

On official from the State school education department said: "Measures are being taken to make toilets in all government schools disabled-friendly. We are, however, facing problems in implementing them as some government school buildings, located in rural areas, are old and we need to renovate the entire structure to construct



EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

disabled-friendly toilets."

## Govt schools fare better

Notably, government schools in the State have better infrastructure for CWSN compared with private ones. The report shows that at least 40.12 per cent government schools have CWSN-friendly toilets while the figure is just 24.21 per cent in private schools. While over 98 per cent government schools have ramps and handrail facilities (both critical to make the campus disabled-friendly) only 34 per cent of private schools have ramps and only 11.57 per cent have handrails.

For the full report, visit [www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com)