

To,

The Hon. High Court of Karnataka

5 December 2023

**Subject: In relation to case WP/15768/2013: an audit of Karnataka state government schools' adherence to infrastructure norms provided in the RTE Act, 2009.**

The Hon. High court of Karnataka, in a recent hearing of the writ petition WP/15768/2013, expressed dissatisfaction with the Karnataka state government's handling of recommendations related to infrastructure and facilities in schools, under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. In a hearing on 22 June 2023, the court criticized the government's claim of progress made in improving the infrastructure conditions of its schools. The court identified discrepancies in the reported data, and ordered a fresh survey of schools with a directive to address immediate shortcomings in drinking water facilities and toilets before the following hearing, which is slated to be on 11 December 2023.

We conducted an independent audit on a small, randomly selected sample of government schools to assess the state's promises of having improved infrastructure in its schools. In November 2023, a month prior to the slated December 2023 hearing wherein the state is expected to have fixed basic infrastructure-related issues, we visited 9 schools at random, located in south Bengaluru. We audited whether the schools had the infrastructure as recommended in the RTE Act 2009. We describe below the infrastructure norms mentioned in the act.

### **Infrastructure norms, provided in the RTE Act 2009, that we audited.**

- **Ratio of teachers to students:** The act recommends roughly one teacher being available for every thirty students.
- **At least one classroom for one each teacher:** Physical rooms needed to be a well functioning school.
- **Separate toilets for boys and girls:** There should exist well functioning toilets, separate for boys and girls.
- **Safe drinking water:** Students should be able to access safe drinking water.
- **Playground:** The school should have a playground.
- **Library:** The school should have a well-functioning library.
- **Sports equipment, playing material:** The school have sports equipment.
- **Walled compound:** The school have a walled compound.

### **Summary of our audit.**

We summarize here primarily the state of infrastructure of the toilets and drinking water facilities, and the ratio of teachers to students. Details from our audit of the other prescribed norms, along with additional comments and photographs from our visits, are available in the following section.

**Of the 9 schools that we audited,**

- **2 out of the 9 schools were not functioning.** One of them shut down in 2020 citing lack of funds, while the other has been shifted to another school's premises citing renovation. No renovation work has been initiated in the last two years now in that school's original premises.

Of the remaining 7 schools,

- **6 out of the 7 schools had poor to very poor toilet facilities.** Here, 'very poor' refers to toilets used by children with broken facilities that are not cleaned daily. On the other hand, 'poor' describes toilets that are cleaned daily but still have broken facilities and are mostly locked throughout the day.
- **4 out of the 7 schools had poor to very poor drinking water facilities.** 'Very poor' indicates a complete absence of drinking water supply in the school. On the other hand, 'poor' refers to schools that must buy cans of water due to malfunctioning water filters on the premises.
- **5 out of the 7 schools have a concerning teacher-student ratio of 1:40 or worse.** The remaining three schools, one of which is under renovation and relocated, show a positive teacher-student ratio. However, it's essential to approach this ratio cautiously, as these three schools have experienced a significant decline in enrollment over the past two years, while the number of teachers has remained constant.

We tabulate a summary of these results below.

| Number | School name and location                                    | Teachers to students ratio                  | Toilets                      |  | Safe drinking water          |  |
|--------|---|---|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
|        |   |   | Condition                    | Comments   | Condition                    | Comments   |
| 1      | Government Kannada Model Higher Primary School, Chamarajpet | 6:300 or 1:50                               | Very poor                    | Very poor condition of toilets. Broken facilities.                   | Very poor                    | Water filter broken. Students asked to carry 1L of water with them.  |
| 2      | Government Kannada Model School, Chamarajpet                | 3:150 or 1:50                               | Poor                         | Generally kept locked. Broken facilities. No staff to clean.         | Poor                         | Main water filter broken. Teachers use the filter in their staff room, fill up an old container, and put it out for students to use. |
| 3      | Government Tamil Lower Primary school, Chamarajpet          | 2:15 or 1:7.5<br>Very poor enrolment rates. | Poor                         | Generally kept locked. Broken facilities. No staff to clean.         | Poor                         | No separate water facilities. Shared with a neighbouring school.   |
| 4      | Model high school, Chamarajpet                              | ---   | School no longer operational | School shut down in 2020 citing a lack of funds. No arrangement made | School no longer operational | ---  |

|   |   |  |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|   |   |  |   | for students to be transferred to other schools.   |   |  |
| 5 | Fort primary school, Chamarajpet                      | 4:150<br>or<br>1:37                                      | Very poor   | Very poor condition of toilets. Broken facilities. Clogged common sinks.   | Good  | Functional water filter.   |
| 6 | APJ Abdul Kalam English and Urdu school, Kalasipalyam | 4:150<br>or<br>1:37                                      | Good  | Cleaner appointed from grants by external agency. Cleaned twice a day  | Good  | The water filter is broken. School buys bottled cans of water.               |
| 7 | Government Tamil Primary School, Chamarajpet          | 2:28<br>or<br>1:9<br><br>Very poor enrollment rates      | Very poor   | Single toilet for both students and teachers   | Good  | No water filter. School buys bottled cans of water.                          |
| 8 | Government Girls' Model Primary School, Basavangudi   | 2:12<br>or<br>1:6<br><br>Enrolment rates have decreased. | School closed for renovation for the last 2 years | Under renovation for the last two years. The entire school has been shifted to Basavangudi middle school, which has resulted in decreased enrolment rates over the last 2 years. | School closed for renovation for the last 2 years | ---  |
| 9 | Basavanagudi Government Middle School, Basavangudi    | 4:180<br>or<br>1:45                                      | Poor  | A cleaner cleans the toilets everyday. Facilities broken and poor but functional.  | Very poor   | Filter broken for the last 5 months. Students asked to carry their own water |

This is a disturbing finding, wherein more than 80% of the schools that we selected at random in the city of Bengaluru and audited had poor toilet, drinking water, and other infrastructure facilities.

We request the Hon. High court of Karnataka to take cognizance of the grave state of affairs our public schools are in, and its implication on the future of our children.

Shashank Srikant

## Detailed findings.

### School 1.

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Name of school                   | Government Kannada Model Higher Primary School   |
| Location                         | Chamarajpet, <a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/AAGmh3LUV4GFjQDB8">https://maps.app.goo.gl/AAGmh3LUV4GFjQDB8</a>   |
| Date of visit                    | 31 October 2023  |
| # of teachers                    | 6  |
| # of students                    | 300  |
| # of classrooms                  | 10   |
| Separate toilet for boys, girls? | Yes  |
| Toilets condition                | <b>Very poor</b>   |
| Drinking water                   | <b>Very poor</b>   |
| Playground available?            | <b>No</b>  |
| Sports facilities available?     | Yes  |
| Walled compound?                 | Yes  |
| Library available?               | Atal tinkering lab also used as library  |
| Additional comments              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Staff has been unable to have the facilities fixed. No funding for it.</li><li>- Mid-day meals program functions well.</li><li>- Atal tinkering lab room has an exposed live wire which has caused electric shocks to multiple students. Remains unfixed.</li><li>- Teachers deeply dissatisfied with private agencies contracting out teacher recruitment. Wages are too low.</li></ul> |

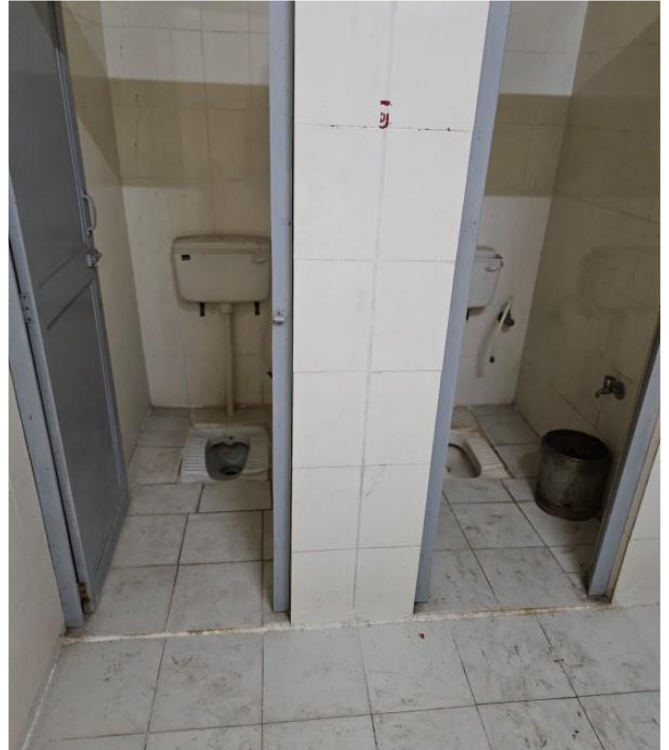




## School 2.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Name of school</b>                   | <b>Government Kannada Model School</b>  |
| <b>Location</b>                         | Chamarajpet, <a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/ofScTsYqbMmDV61Y7">https://maps.app.goo.gl/ofScTsYqbMmDV61Y7</a>  |
| <b>Date of visit</b>                    | 31 October 2023   |
| <b># of teachers</b>                    | 3. But functionally just one teacher who manages 4 classes.   |
| <b># of students</b>                    | 150   |
| <b># of classrooms</b>                  | 5   |
| <b>Separate toilet for boys, girls?</b> | <b>Yes but mostly locked. No caretaker to clean it daily.</b>   |
| <b>Toilets condition</b>                | <b>Poor. Broken facilities.</b>   |
| <b>Drinking water</b>                   | <b>Poor. Broken facilities. Teachers have found out a workaround.</b>   |
| <b>Playground available?</b>            | <b>No</b>   |
| <b>Sports facilities available?</b>     | <b>No</b>   |
| <b>Walled compound?</b>                 | Yes   |
| <b>Library available?</b>               | <b>No</b>   |
| <b>Additional comments</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seems to have an acute shortage of teachers. One teacher, the head mistress, was handling 4 classes at the same time.</li> <li>- Toilets are kept open only for a short while. No funds to have a caretaker visit and clean the toilets everyday.</li> </ul> |





**School 3.**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of school</b>                   | <b>Government Tamil Lower Primary school</b>   |
| <b>Location</b>                         | Chamarajpet, <a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/ofScTsYqbMmDV61Y7">https://maps.app.goo.gl/ofScTsYqbMmDV61Y7</a> |
| <b>Date of visit</b>                    | 31 October 2023  |
| <b># of teachers</b>                    | 2  |
| <b># of students</b>                    | 15   |
| <b># of classrooms</b>                  | 3  |
| <b>Separate toilet for boys, girls?</b> | Yes. Shared with Government Kannada Model school   |
| <b>Toilets condition</b>                | <b>Poor. Shared with Government Kannada Model school. Mostly kept locked. Broken facilities</b>                |
| <b>Drinking water</b>                   | <b>Poor. Shared with Government Kannada Model school.</b>  |
| <b>Playground available?</b>            | <b>No</b>  |
| <b>Sports facilities available?</b>     | <b>No</b>  |
| <b>Walled compound?</b>                 | Yes  |
| <b>Library available?</b>               | <b>No</b>  |
| <b>Additional comments</b>              | None   |







#### School 4.

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Name of school                   | Model high school Chamarajpet  |
| Location                         | Chamarajpet, <a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/zauLG6v3usXQggU87">https://maps.app.goo.gl/zauLG6v3usXQggU87</a> |
| Date of visit                    | 31 October 2023  |
| # of teachers                    | NA   |
| # of students                    | NA   |
| # of classrooms                  | NA   |
| Separate toilet for boys, girls? | NA   |
| Toilets condition                | NA   |
| Drinking water                   | NA   |
| Playground available?            | No   |
| Sports facilities available?     | NA   |
| Walled compound?                 | Yes  |
| Library available?               | NA   |
| Additional comments              | School shut down in 2020 citing a lack of funds.   |





#### School 5.

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Name of school                   | Fort primary school Chamarajpet  |
| Location                         | Chamarajpet, <a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/F4KdEHphuiHwmmUM8">https://maps.app.goo.gl/F4KdEHphuiHwmmUM8</a> |
| Date of visit                    | 31 October 2023  |
| # of teachers                    | 4  |
| # of students                    | 150  |
| # of classrooms                  | 7  |
| Separate toilet for boys, girls? | Yes  |
| Toilets condition                | <b>Very poor. Completely broken facilities without any daily maintenance.</b>                                  |
| Drinking water                   | Good   |
| Playground available?            | Yes  |
| Sports facilities available?     | Yes  |
| Walled compound?                 | Yes  |
| Library available?               | <b>No</b>  |
| Additional comments              | None   |







#### School 6.

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Name of school                   | APJ Abdul Kalam English and Urdu school Kalasipalyam  |
| Location                         | Kalasipalyam, <a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/M2gd8ChEgE1xBDY27">https://maps.app.goo.gl/M2gd8ChEgE1xBDY27</a>   |
| Date of visit                    | 31 October 2023   |
| # of teachers                    | 4   |
| # of students                    | 150   |
| # of classrooms                  | 6   |
| Separate toilet for boys, girls? | No  |
| Toilets condition                | Good. The school hires a caretaker to clean the toilets everyday.   |
| Drinking water                   | The water filter at the facility is broken. A charitable organization supplies bottled cans of water to the school everyday, which the students consume water from. |
| Playground available?            | Yes   |
| Sports facilities available?     | Yes   |
| Walled compound                  | Yes   |
| Library available?               | No  |
| Additional comments              | None.   |

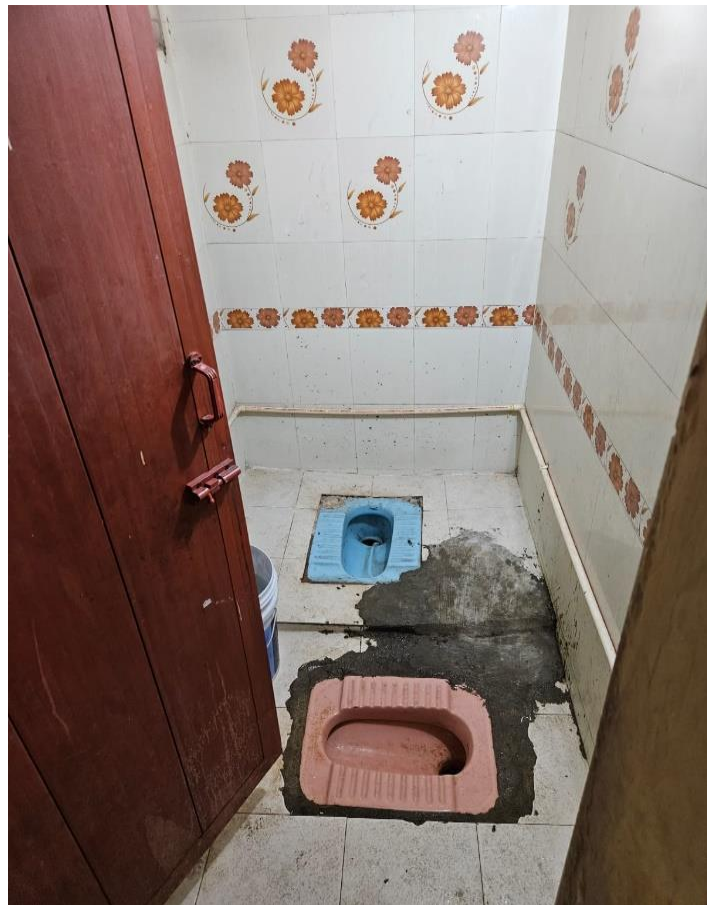




**School 7.**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of school</b>                   | <b>Government Tamil Primary School Chamarajpet</b>   |
| <b>Location</b>                         | Anandpuram, Chamarajpet.<br><a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/UKXokb4cJndDqpAk8">https://maps.app.goo.gl/UKXokb4cJndDqpAk8</a>  |
| <b>Date of visit</b>                    | 31 October 2023  |
| <b># of teachers</b>                    | 2  |
| <b># of students</b>                    | 15-20  |
| <b># of classrooms</b>                  | 1  |
| <b>Separate toilet for boys, girls?</b> | No   |
| <b>Toilets condition</b>                | Poor   |
| <b>Drinking water</b>                   | Yes – but bottled water purchased by school  |
| <b>Playground available?</b>            | No   |
| <b>Sports facilities available?</b>     | No   |
| <b>Walled compound</b>                  | No   |
| <b>Library available?</b>               | No   |
| <b>Additional comments</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One single room for classes 1 to 5. Operations since 1956.</li> <li>- Enrolment very poor: a total of 15 students in total.</li> <li>- Two teachers.</li> <li>- One bathroom being used by both students and the teachers.</li> <li>- Water and mid-day meals function well. No water filter on premises. They procure a large can of bottle everyday.</li> <li>- School not built on BBMP property. As a result, constant tension with local slum board who are not keen on continuing with a school in their area.</li> </ul> |





### School 8.

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Name of school                   | Government Girls' Model Primary School   |
| Location                         | Basavangudi, <a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/HdVoWmzFsmCt2Auu7">https://maps.app.goo.gl/HdVoWmzFsmCt2Auu7</a>   |
| Date of visit                    | 10 November 2023   |
| # of teachers                    | 2  |
| # of students                    | 15   |
| # of classrooms                  | 2 (in the makeshift premises they have been shifted to)  |
| Separate toilet for boys, girls? | NA   |
| Toilets condition                | NA   |
| Drinking water                   | NA   |
| Playground available?            | Yes  |
| Sports facilities available?     | NA   |
| Walled compound                  | Yes  |
| Library available?               | NA   |
| Additional comments              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School premises had closed two years ago citing renovation work.</li> <li>- No renovation has started since. It was used as a polling booth in the state elections of 2023.</li> <li>- The school has been shifted to Basavangudi government middle school in the interim.</li> <li>- There's no clarity though on the time until when they can return to the original premises.</li> </ul> |





School 9.

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Name of school                   | Basavanagudi Government Middle School  |
| Location                         | Basavangudi, <a href="https://maps.app.goo.gl/1qBVe6BzYrCMmy9Y9">https://maps.app.goo.gl/1qBVe6BzYrCMmy9Y9</a>   |
| Date of visit                    | 10 November 2023   |
| # of teachers                    | 4  |
| # of students                    | 180  |
| # of classrooms                  | 6  |
| Separate toilet for boys, girls? | No   |
| Toilets condition                | Poor. Broken facilities. But a caretaker cleans it everyday.<br>The toilet is currently a makeshift one.<br>The school's original toilets have been under renovation for the last 5 months, as of November 2023. |
| Drinking water                   | No. Broken taps in the filters. Students are asked to carry water from home. Large water cans are also occasionally procured.  |
| Playground available?            | Yes  |
| Sports facilities available?     | Yes  |
| Walled compound                  | Yes  |
| Library available?               | No   |
| Additional comments              | None   |







Shashank Srikant

--- END OF REPORT ---