From pilots to policy
Government of India sector reforms will be implemented throughout Maharashtra

To realize its goal of providing sustained drinking water to every village in the state, the Maharashtra Government has decided to introduce the Government of India pilots on sector reforms in the water supply sector throughout Maharashtra. Moving beyond implementing reforms in four pilot districts, the Government of Maharashtra will restructure the water supply program in 32 districts of the state. Users will now plan and manage their own water supply schemes and gram panchayats will be entrusted with operation and maintenance.

On July 27, 2000, the Maharashtra Government issued a Government Resolution to this effect. The Resolution acknowledges that water supply schemes ‘cannot be successful on a sustainable basis and cannot become people-oriented unless the local community, in need of drinking water, is actively involved and associated with the managerial and financial decision-making throughout the stages of project planning, implementation, operation and maintenance.’ It seeks to replace state-run, supply-driven subsidized programs for water supply followed in the past with demand-responsive schemes—meeting the needs of villagers through joint community action and treating water as a commodity with social and economic value. These schemes will be implemented in every district of the state, excluding the urban limits of Mumbai.

The Resolution specifically aims to provide power to the community by increasing the role of beneficiaries in the planning and management of their own facilities, recovering 10 per cent of the capital cost from users, and ensuring that 100 per cent of the expenditure for operation and maintenance is borne by the beneficiaries. In this process, the role of the Government will shift from that of a provider to a facilitator.

Since women are the major stakeholders in this sector, responsible for water collection and facing the main burden of unsafe and non-sustainable water supply, the Government seeks their active involvement in water supply projects. Local women’s groups will now have to certify that the project has been satisfactorily completed. Women will also be appointed to village water and sanitation committees, and will be trained to maintain handpumps in the area. It is proposed that at least 30 per cent of the handpump mechanics trained under...
We would like to congratulate you for publishing an excellent newsletter, Jalvaani. We are an organization that has worked actively in water management since 1993. We would like to receive Jalvaani regularly.

Indukanth S. Ragade
Alacrity Housing Ltd., Chennai

Our organization has been involved in implementing poverty alleviation programs. We have incorporated water resource-based development packages in all our programs. In this connection, we came across Jalvaani, Vol. 3, No. 2, documenting a successful design for tubewells in the hilly areas. We feel that the experiences and policy initiatives that Jalvaani promotes will benefit the downtrodden of our country.

Narendra, K.C.
Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal, Kathmandu

Did you know that of the total world water (estimated at 1,386,000,000 cubic lcms), nearly 97.5 per cent is salt water and 2.5 per cent (35,000,000 cubic lcms) is fresh water?

97.5% salt water
2.5% fresh water

Government schemes will be women from the community.

Generating political will, and building awareness and consensus at every level for sector reforms, has been a long process involving wide-ranging deliberations. This process was initiated in December 1999 by the Water Supply and Sanitation Department (WSSD), Government of Maharashtra. To sensitize leaders from different parties and to create the political will for sector reforms, officials organized a series of meetings from February to April with members of the State legislature. These deliberations resulted in the Government of Maharashtra finally approving the guidelines for statewide implementation in July 2000.

According to Mr V.P. Raja, Secretary, WSSD, the reform process received a tremendous boost after the adoption of the Cochin Declaration at the State Water Ministers’ Workshop in December 1999. Mr Raja took the initiative further with members of the State legislature and, in this effort, he found the Water and Sanitation Program-South Asia publications extremely useful.

The Government of Maharashtra has shown the way for other State Governments to follow, not just to successfully implement the pilot reforms but to upscale them as well.

For further information, contact
S. Prabhakaran
Principal Secretary
Water Supply and Sanitation Department
Government of Maharashtra
Mantralaya, Mumbai 400 032

Would you like to send Jalvaani to some local groups that we work with. We request you to send us 30 copies of Jalvaani.

Mihir R. Bhatt
Honorary Director, Disaster Mitigation Institute, Ahmedabad

As you are aware, the Government of Maharashtra has introduced the sector reform package for the rural water supply program along the lines of the Government of India guidelines across the entire state. Before announcing the decision, the Government undertook wide consultations with various political parties, opinion leaders and the public at large through the media and the press. I wish to acknowledge the significant contribution of the Water and Sanitation Program-South Asia in this endeavor. Jalvaani, the proceedings of the Jal Manthans and the field notes were very useful. The cartoon series ‘Water and the Poor,’ reproduced as calendars and greeting cards, was well received by ministers, senior officers, and members of the press. In their own way, these publications helped people in positions of authority to introspect and make a decision to carry out a paradigm shift in policy.

V.P. Raja
Secretary, Water Supply and Sanitation Department, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai

A sector reform workshop in progress.
On an average, a household in India generates approximately 1kg of degradable waste, a typical panchayat 10 tons and a small city 400 tons every day. If these huge amounts of waste are not properly managed, our drinking water sources will become polluted, leading to the spread of water-borne diseases. To create a clean and healthy environment, sanitation activities need to address the problem of solid waste disposal.

Solid waste management involves the disposal of waste matter by reducing, recovering, recycling or reusing wastes and restoring resources. One of the most environment-friendly methods to treat organic waste is by vermi-composting. This is a simple process where solid waste, which has low carbon content, is mixed with material of high nitrogen content, mostly vegetation, and fed to certain species of earthworms. The digestion of this mixture by earthworms constitutes the vermi-composting process.

Vermi-composting has a number of advantages. It is one of the most appropriate and cost-effective methods of solid waste management as it does not involve major costs or expenditure. Moreover, wastes can be treated at source. Excellent quality compost is generated through this method, which restores rich soil nutrients and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers. Composting units can be set up in houses, neighborhoods and market places as well as at the municipal level.

If undertaken on a large scale, vermi-composting can become an income-generating activity. One ton of degradable waste yields approximately 950 kg of compost, which can be sold at Rs 5 per kg.

The capital cost is estimated to be Rs 2,500 and the recurrent cost minimal.

In Kerala, an NGO has successfully taken the lead in setting up vermi-composting schemes to manage waste. Through the efforts of Socio-Economic Unit Foundation (SEUF), vermi clubs have been organized to sensitize the community to the need for solid waste management and to promote vermi-composting techniques. A vermiculture unit has also been set up to train representatives of community-based organizations and panchayat members.

Through SEUF’s initiative, local institutions have come to recognize the importance of managing solid waste by vermi-composting, and have begun integrating related activities in their project planning. It is also being acknowledged that inefficient methods of waste disposal by municipalities and corporations have resulted in huge amounts of money being wasted, and that effective disposal can bring down costs considerably.

For further information, contact Socio-Economic Unit Foundation Katoor, PO Alapuzha, Kerala
At the State Water Ministers’ Workshop in Kerala in December 1999, a consensus was reached on strategic action for reform in the rural water sector. The sector reform agenda adopted at the workshop, as stated in the Cochin Declaration, advocates three key principles: integrated water resource management, adopting a demand-responsive approach, and moving towards the use of participatory processes. To take these reforms forward, a series of Jal Manthans—rural think-tanks—were organized by the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) and the Water and Sanitation Program-South Asia (WSP-SA).

The Jal Manthan is a platform to share experiences and learning among the pilot districts and key policy-makers on sector reforms. As a first step, a national-level workshop was held on July 10 in New Delhi to launch sector reforms in 58 pilot districts of India. More than 100 representatives from the Central and State Government, including secretaries and chief engineers, participated at the workshop. Following the national-level Jal Manthan, four regional workshops were held at Mangalore (July 29), Udaipur (September 1), Nainital (October 4-5) and Guwahati (November 2-3) for the southern, western, northern and eastern states, respectively. At these Jal Manthans, district-level officers and political representatives shared their experiences on the design and implementation of sector reforms. The third and fourth workshops were designed to discuss in detail the present status of implementation of 10 sector reforms at the district level, the future course of action to be taken, bottlenecks at various levels and possible solutions.

With a few variations, the regional workshops were divided into three sessions. The first session began with a welcome by the host State Secretary, followed by the keynote address by Mr S.K. Tripathi, Secretary, Drinking Water Supply, Government of India and a presentation on sector reforms by Mr A. Kumar, Mission Director, RGNDWM. The second session brought to the fore some of the operational issues in implementing demand-responsive projects through specific cases of such projects. The highly successful Swajal project in Uttar Pradesh, on which sector reforms are based, was discussed. Presentations were also made on similar regional projects and the design of pilot projects that WSP-SA is assisting State Governments to implement. In the last session, short presentations on the projects under the sector reform process were made by representatives of the pilot districts in the region.

Mr S.K. Tripathi stressed at the workshops that these reforms intend to institutionalize community participation in the rural water supply sector by enabling the beneficiaries of water supply schemes to plan, partially fund, implement, operate, maintain, manage and also provide for replacement of their schemes’. He repeatedly emphasized that, under the sector reform agenda, ‘the Government will function primarily as a facilitator’ and that ‘in time, these reforms will be scaled up to cover the entire ARWSP’.

To date, Rs 1,611 crore has been sanctioned for the projects, to be disbursed over the next two years.
**NEWS BRIEFS**

**WSP LAUNCHES A WATER HELP DESK IN SOUTH ASIA**

The World Bank and the Water and Sanitation Program have recently launched a Water Help Desk in New Delhi to provide information to support activities in the urban and rural water supply and sanitation sectors. The Help Desk offers a ‘one-stop-shop’ for an array of information on Bank engagement in the sector, including references to project documents and lending, sector business opportunities, and referral to water specialists within and outside the Bank.

The Help Desk aims to support government officials, academia, private sector consultants, NGOs and other development agencies with its regional outreach.

The Water Help Desk website contains answers to frequently asked questions on sector statistics, water and sewage tariffs, benchmarking and privatization. In addition, updates on conferences, seminars and workshops will be readily available.

Website: www.worldbank.org/html/fpd/water/homepage

**SANITATION CONNECTION GLOBAL HELP DESK**

Sanitation Connection is a web-based resource which facilitates access to information on sanitation. A range of partners take responsibility to provide information on selected issues.

The initiative is led by the International Water Association Foundation (IWA), United Nations Environment Programme GPA coordination office (UNEP/GPA), Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and World Health Organisation (WHO).

Sanitation Connection is seeking partners to manage information on India. Visit the site at www.sanicon.net or contact the Help Desk at helpdesk@sanicon.net or phone at (91-11) 469 0488.

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**NOTICE BOARD**

**WEDC CONFERENCE**

The 26th Conference will debate issues related to ‘Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Challenges of the Millennium’. November 5-9, 2000 • Dhaka, Bangladesh

**WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION COLLABORATIVE COUNCIL**

The Fifth Global Forum will focus on ‘Vision 21—Hygiene, Sanitation and Water for All’. The Forum is organized by the WSSCC, with support from the Brazilian Association of Sanitary Engineering. November 25-29, 2000 • Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

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**Jalvaani editorial**

As you may be aware, the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) has successfully launched sector reforms in 58 pilot districts in India. The purpose of these pilots is to translate the principles of sector reforms into state policy. In our lead story, we share with readers the Maharashtra Government’s experience of taking a decision to implement sector reforms throughout the state. Their example of building awareness and consensus among members of the legislature is crucial to take the sector reform process ahead. It would be good if other State Governments follow Maharashtra’s initiative of upscaling the reform process.

The presence of high levels of iron in the Kosi river has adversely affected the health of the catchment population. To improve the quality of water, the Government of Bihar has set up iron removal plants in over 6,000 villages. By involving the community and ensuring cost recovery from the users, these schemes promise to be a sustainable answer to the problem of water quality in the state.

Sharing experiences in the water and sanitation sector through newsletters like Jalvaani are being replicated. In Kerala, Jaaldayani, a newsletter in Malayalam, provides information to local communities and documents district-level initiatives and success stories in the water and sanitation sector.

The RGNDWM, in collaboration with the Water and Sanitation Program-South Asia, has formed a network of the pilot districts implementing sector reforms. Between July and November, a national workshop and four regional workshops were organized to introduce the design of demand-responsive schemes in selected districts. The Jal Manthan is intended to be a platform to share experiences and learning among the pilot districts.

The efficient disposal of solid waste is an important sanitation activity. An NGO in rural Kerala is promoting vermi-composting as a cost-effective and eco-friendly answer to waste disposal. Through their efforts, clubs and training programs have been started to sensitize communities to the need for solid waste management. Vermi-composting is an appropriate technology solution for waste disposal and needs to be taken up on a large scale.

In this issue we meet an enterprising president of a gram panchayat in Tamil Nadu. Mr Gnanasekaran shares his experiences of how the village took the lead in promoting sector reforms and organizing a community-based scheme to meet its water needs. We learn from his story that village communities are enthusiastically supporting sector reforms, and that cost sharing has been successfully implemented in earlier community schemes as well.

As always, we look forward to feedback from our readers.

Anil Kumar
Mission Director
Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission
Government of India
Cleaning the Kosi river
Iron treatment plants prove successful in Bihar

Apart from causing devastating floods every year in Bihar, there is another reason to call the Kosi the river of sorrow. The level of iron precipitate in the water is so high that it has wreaked havoc with the lives of the people, earning itself the name kala pani (black water). To address the problem of excessive iron levels in drinking water, the Bihar Government has set up one of the largest water quality improvement schemes in the state. The Kosi Amrit Peyjal Yojana (KAPY) currently operates in nine districts, benefiting over 6,000 villages and five million people.

Through the KAPY scheme, two iron removal plants will be set up in each project village. Water treatment at these plants is based on simple iron removal technology developed at a local polytechnic. Since locally available material is used in the plants, construction is easy and economical. The estimated cost of each plant, based on 1998 rates, is Rs 10,830, which includes the cost of the lift pump. Maintenance costs are estimated to be Rs 250 per year. The Government of India funds the scheme, with UNICEF meeting 10 per cent of the project cost.

It is widely accepted that water supply schemes can be successful only if the community develops a stake in the project. Under the KAPY scheme, users will be required to meet part of the project cost as the Government will not sanction any plant without proof of the possibility of cost recovery. Watsan committees have been set up in project villages to represent the voice of the community and ensure that the needs of the people are met. Each committee has a caretaker, or an elected representative, who informs the community about every aspect of the construction and maintenance of the plant, problems that may arise from time to time, and possible methods of rectifying them. The caretaker also liaises with the Government on behalf of the community.

Watsan committees have been given the responsibility for operating and maintaining treatment plants so that they can be sustained in the long run. Accounts have been opened with contributions from users, which are being used to fund operation and maintenance. Community members are also being trained to check the quality of water so that they are assured of a safe supply at all times.

For the first time, users in Bihar are participating in the selection of project sites. Masons and carpenters at the village level are being trained in construction techniques so that the community will have the skills to construct their own plants.

The KAPY project, which was launched just a year ago, has already achieved remarkable results. Over 6,000 plants have been constructed, 1,000 plants handed over to Watsan committees, 400 bank accounts opened and 1,500 masons and carpenters trained. Given the impressive coverage of the scheme, it may not be long before the Kosi is transformed into a river of joy!

An iron treatment plant set up under the KAPY scheme.

For further information, contact
N.S. Madhavan
Secretary, Public Health Engineering Department, Government of Bihar, Patna
Jalvaani has inspired a small community in Kerala to share its experiences in the water and sanitation sector. In Erimayur panchayat, Palakad district, a newsletter has been launched to document local initiatives in the sector. Published by Maithri, a local NGO, Jaldayani is a four-page newsletter in Malayalam. With 1,000 copies being printed, the newsletter aims to reach a large number of beneficiaries in the district.

Jaldayani highlights crucial issues in water and sanitation, such as the role of women in the development process and the importance of community participation in water supply and sanitation schemes. Micro-financing, water harvesting, masons’ training schemes, and the need for transparency in maintaining accounts are other issues that are covered. The importance of sensitizing the community to the need for hygiene and sanitation has also been stressed.

The first issue of Jaldayani, published in May 2000, discusses the highly successful Kerala rural water supply program being implemented in Palakad. This scheme has been set up by the Kerala Rural Water Supply Agency and is supported by the World Bank. A key feature of the scheme is that it is community-driven and the beneficiaries are responsible for designing, implementing, monitoring, operating and maintaining the scheme. As many as 75 households, covering more than 3,800 families, are actively participating in the first phase of this project.

The newsletter documents the important role that women play in this sector. In Palakad, women are being trained as masons and mechanics in toilet construction and in the maintenance and repair of handpumps. Empowering women has resulted in a tangible improvement in the quality of their lives. Jaldayani cites that women have set up a bank and thrift and credit societies to help them achieve financial independence. They have been trained to maintain their accounts systematically. The success of these societies can be gauged from the fact that women in this area now manage crores of rupees and have eliminated the need to raise loans from moneylenders. Clearly, the rural water supply and sanitation sector in Kerala is moving from ensuring the mere participation of women to their actual empowerment.

In a number of villages in Kerala, enterprising masons and mechanics have taken the initiative and constructed wells and toilets in their area. To encourage local masons to build their own facilities, Jaldayani provides technical details on where and how to construct a toilet or well, stressing the need to keep in mind sanitation issues, water contamination and seepage. Jaldayani also informs its readers about cost-effective methods of rainwater harvesting and how appropriate structures can be constructed to harvest water.

Kerala is flush with success stories in water and sanitation, many of which can easily be replicated in the field. Jaldayani is playing an important role by informing communities about local projects in the sector, documenting innovative initiatives in detail and encouraging users to set up similar schemes.

For further information, contact
Vinod Kumar P.
Maithri, PO Erimayur, Palakad District Kerala

NGOs

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Jalvaani
A community takes the lead

Mr Gnanasekaran, President, Chikkarampalayam gram panchayat, Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu

Community ownership in water supply schemes is a relatively new concept. How did you decide to adopt such an innovative approach?

We heard about the concept of demand-driven strategies through community participation under the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) from the newspapers and through the IEC activities of the District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM). The Collector, who is Chairman of the DWSM, convened a meeting with the district representatives, from village presidents to MLAs, and explained the details of the program of community participation.

To implement this scheme in our village, we had a discussion with the Collector and Executive Engineer, Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage (TWAD) Board, Rural Water Supply Division, Coimbatore. Then we conducted a gram sabha meeting in the village where the RGNDWM scheme of people’s participation was explained.

NGOs discussed the need for community participation in the development program as well as the details of the scheme at the meeting. These details were placed before the gram sabha for its consideration and acceptance.

Detailed discussions were held on the contribution of rural folk to meet at least 10 per cent of the estimated cost. Convinced of the advantages of this scheme, the people of my village have come forward to contribute their share.

I would like to mention that this concept of public participation is already popular in Tamil Nadu. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has launched a similar program called ‘Namakkku Name Thittam’ (We for Ourselves), where the public contributes 25 per cent of the cost.

How did you operationalize the scheme in your village?

On the advice of district-level officers, we have formed a village water sanitation committee (VWSC), which consists of 12 members, with 5 women members. We have opened a bank account in joint names to deposit the community’s contribution.

Norms for collecting contributions from the public, as discussed in the gram sabha meeting, have been established.

We have given the DWSM a representation for a water supply scheme in our village where we presented the actual demand and the nature of the scheme to be executed. Based on the request of the DWSM, TWAD Board engineers visited our area and discussed the project with the VWSC, following which an estimate was prepared based on our requirements. The VWSC submitted the estimate to the DWSM along with its concurrence, and the DWSM accorded approval for Rs 4.49 lakh. The VWSC collected the balance from the public and requested the DWSM to execute the scheme through the TWAD Board.

The TWAD Board has processed the tender and the contractor has been fixed. Work on the construction of overhead tanks and pipe-laying is being taken up with people’s participation.

How will the funds be utilized?

We have decided that Rs 30 per month will be collected as water charges for the house service connection. This revenue will be utilized for the operation and maintenance of the assets created through community participation.

A cash book register, an income and expenditure register, and a materials issue register are being maintained in our panchayat for proper accounting.