

Three interesting features of this case

- High levels of professionalism and transparency at the service provider level - accurate, publically available records – and in one village the GP & VWSC meetings are telecasted to the entire village so people can watch
- Over the past decades Karnataka has been the site of many international supported programmes in the RWS sector so community management is a well-established model for many villages and also government
- Many of the good practices from Jal Nirmal have been institutionalized in the villages but the challenge is now for the RDWSSD to support continued community management now the programme has ended

Key data on the Karnataka context

All India data for reference in parenthesis

Water supply coverage: 96% (96%)

GDP per capita: \$5,108 (\$4,243)

HDI: 0.519 (0.467)

Devolution Index rank: 2 out of 24

Community Water Plus, a research project, has investigated twenty case studies of successful community managed rural water supply programmes across 17 states in India. Through these case studies, the research has gained insight into the type and amount of support to community organisations that is needed, and the resources implications of this ‘plus’ – in terms of money, staffing, and other factors. This case study presents the case of the World Bank assisted Jal Nirmal Project in Karnataka.

Belagavi, one among the 11 northern districts of Karnataka suffered from water shortage and water quality problems particularly in summers. Under the Jal Nirmal project rural water systems were put in place. These are managed by Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC). The Rural Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Department has facilitated the setting-up of these VWSCs through trainings and technical support and trained them for operation, maintenance and tariff collection. In spite of high tariff norms, payment is regular and sufficient to cover operational expenditure and deliver quality services. Therefore the water schemes operating in Belagavi are classified as ‘Community Management with Direct Support’.



Enabling support environment

The Rural Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Department (RDWSD) and Jal Nirmal constitute the enabling support environment. Additionally there is Gram Panchayat playing a facilitators role in tariff collection. The key features of the enabling support environment are:

- The institutional set up in Belagavi is well-coordinated with engineering and social development team working closely under the District Project Manager
- RDWSD followed a professionalised approach that balanced technical support with the specialist ‘softer’ support focused on empowering VWSC in fixing user charges, collecting tariffs and taking decisions for spending money and hiring of maintenance staff from their own village.
- RDWSD has a strong mandate for support for which it has tools and methods. The additional tools and processes like the specialist social development team created under Jal Nirmal contributed to RDWSD’s success in addition to tracking performance and monitoring client satisfaction..
- Training and orientation of RDWSD officials on community development and participatory skills for community engagement in setting up and maintenance of infrastructure and training VWSC and GP on their roles and responsibilities were important ingredients that created a successful partnership in Belagavi.

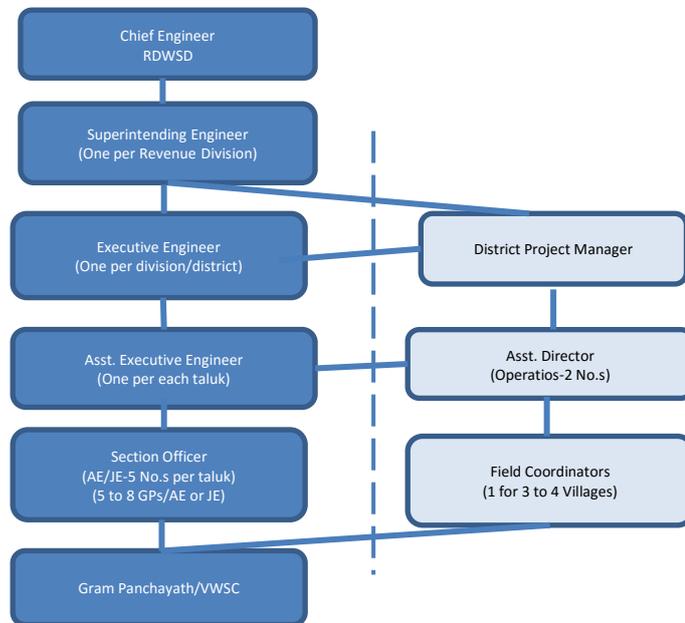


Figure 1 Organogram of RDWSD, GoK

Community service provider

All water supply systems are being managed in first instance by communities through VWSCs. In single-village schemes, there is a single VWSC and there is a Joint Committee, constituted of VWSC representatives in case of multi-village schemes. These VWSCs have a balanced composition of wise elders and enthusiastic youth and ongoing awareness programme. They are trained in operation and maintenance of water services and plays a strong role in determining tariff rates and its stringent compliance that enables it to cover the operation and maintenance cost and maintaining quality services. Some VWSCs are adopting forward looking approach for efficient tariff management. In one village it has recently installed water meters for charging future water tariff collection based on volumetric consumption. This has led to optimum utilisation of water resulting in water saving.

In the case of multi-village schemes, the responsibility for operation and maintenance was given to a private company called Niketan Engineering by RDWSD. However VWSCs of respective villages are taking proactive steps to increase the number of household connections to ensure enough revenue and to reduce the burden on the state government by creating awareness.

In all the villages’ gram panchayat and VWSC work in a collaborative manner. Standard tariff collection has created an excellent fiscal management and surplus money. Gram Panchayat is raising demand in meetings on annual basis and households deposit money in designated bank account and submit proof to GP.

Service received by households

Water is supplied through piped systems with household connections and public stand posts. Household coverage was found to differ a lot from 37% to 100%.

The table below presents summary findings on the levels of service from villages surveyed. These show quite mixed results, with some villages have high water quantity and accessibility – these are villages with perennial water sources and household tap connections. In others, the quantity supplied varied due to factors like limited pumping hours, fewer household connections and a higher percentage of households being BPL, that depend more on standpipes. Water quality is good across three intervention villages as it is treated and supplied and reliability of supply is high during summer and non-summer months.

Table 1: Household Service Levels Summary

Service level	Quantity	Accessibility	Water Quality Perception	Continuity	Reliability
High	28%	79%	98%	0%	64%
Improved	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	19%	4%	0%	66%	0%
Sub- standard	28%	16%	0%	34%	0%
No service	3%	1%	0%	0%	0%
n/a	1%	0%	2%	0%	36%

Equity in water distribution is followed irrespective of caste/group. Piped water supply connection is determined more by geographical spread of the pipeline rather than social background of the people. Such issues are taken care of during planning and execution of the works. For improving sustainability community is maintaining tab over expenditure, use technological innovations like solar energy, groundwater recharge, meter systems for optimum usage and taken decision to supply water once in two days.

The costs

Capital costs - of a total of 3,234 INR/person - are largely done by the World Bank through the Jal Nirmal project. Local contributions amount to about 10%, evenly split between the local governments (GP) and communities. Of all the capital costs, around 2% is for software support. Of the 193 INR/person/year spent on recurrent costs, communities pay around 95%. These are roughly the costs on minor repairs, labour, fuel, chemicals and regular purchases of any other materials at the VWSC level. State government contributions are the costs of major repairs or replacements.

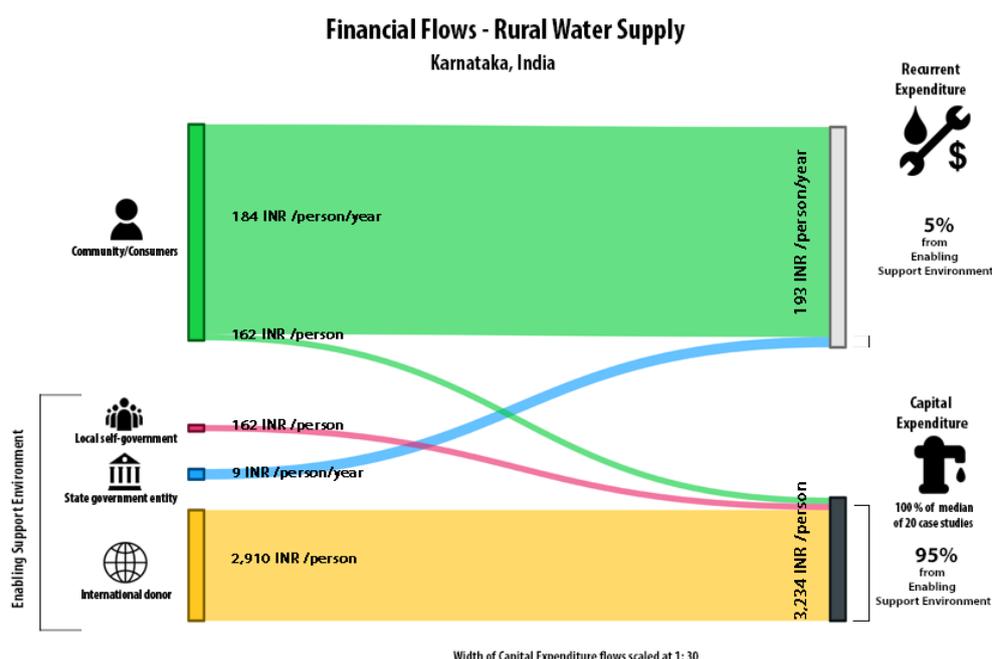


Figure 2: Financial flows for capital and recurrent costs

Conclusions

RDWSD is found to be an effective enabling support entity with clearly articulated mandate and professional support model that provides a comprehensive and structured support in a demand-responsive manner. Under Jal Nirmal the RDWSD effectively performed its role, however its supportive role was higher during the infrastructural development, or asset renewal and enhancement compared to support in service provision which was based on request.

Through this role, communities were enabled to participate in the water supply programme. Above all, a certain level of VWSC professionalization was achieved as these were trained in operation, management and administration. This made a marked difference in the functioning and sustainability of the water supply. This is evident from the high proportion of household connections, regular payment of higher tariffs in Jal Nirmal villages and community taking on more advanced activities like water security and quality assessment measures and water metering through support. Additional inputs that created a difference was involvement of youth along with experienced people in VWSCs for ensuring adequate, safe and continuous supplies.

Therefore, based on the community management continuum the water supply management in the intervention villages falls under the category “Community Management with Direct Support”.

This does also leads to a marked way in which the costs are financed. The Jal Nirmal covers almost all capital costs, with a 10% local contribution. But communities pay almost all recurrent costs of operation and maintenance, with a small government contribution to capital maintenance costs.

About this note

This is a summary of a full case study as part of the Community Water Plus project. The original case study was written by Dr. M.S. Rama Mohan Rao & M.S. Raviprakash from the Centre of Excellence for Change, whereas the summary was prepared by Ruchika Shiva. The full case study can be downloaded <http://www.ircwash.org/projects/india-community-water-plus-project>.

The project has investigated successful community-managed rural water supply programmes and approaches across India, and drawn out lessons on the support needed to make community-management successful. The project is funded by Australian Aid and is being implemented by a consortium of partners, including: the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), the Centre of Excellence for Change (CEC), Malaviya National Institute of Technology (MNIT), the Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS) and IRC with overall project coordination provided by Cranfield University.



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