

Supporting community-managed water supply in Morappur

Tamil Nadu

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY

Community Water *plus*

Three interesting features of this case

- Recognising what is within the capability of the community': Public-Private bulk water & community distribution
- Significant subsidy for 'high-cost' bulk water by the external support entity
- There is evidence of software slippage between support programmes, hence requiring capital maintenance in software through the CEC-facilitated Community Change Management Groups

Key data on the Tamil Nadu context

All India data for reference in parenthesis

Water supply coverage: 98% (96%)

GDP per capita: \$6,427 (\$4,243)

HDI: 0.57 (0.467)

Devolution Index (Rank): 5 out of 24

Photo: Community Change Management Group members explaining role in water quality testing (Paul Hutchings)

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 document presents the case of Morappur (Tamil Nadu), a government-labelled 'dark' block, that suffers from depleted and contaminated groundwater.

From 2004-2007, the TWAD Board, a public utility, followed a participatory approach to address water insecurity in the area. Recently, CEC, a national NGO, has undertaken additional efforts to (re) mobilise communities. And there have been massive investments from the state government in a new bulk water scheme bringing surface water to the region.

Through these efforts, semi-autonomous, Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSC) have been set-up as sub-committees of the Gram Panchayat, fulfilling the service provider roles. With such a strong role for local government the model can be classified as a form of direct provision with community involvement. The local government, in turn, receives support from both CEC and State government. In the better performing villages, this is transitioning into a more professional community-based management model.



The enabling support environment

Support organisations that operate in Morappur make up the 'enabling support environment', these are Tamil Nadu Water and Drainage Board (TWAD Board), Centre of Excellence for Change (CEC), Hogenakkal Water Supply Fluorosis Mitigation Project (HWSFMP) and the Block Development Office (BDO).

- TWAD Board is responsible for implementation and monitoring and its main body continues to play an important oversight role and provides technical assistance on certain matters.
- The HWSFMP supplies bulk water and directly supports the employment of an operator in each village, with the scheme dramatically changing the source sustainable problems that had plagued many systems.
- Over the past 24 months, CEC have implemented an intensive software programme in which they mobilise communities to form Community Change Management Groups that supplements the existing village-level institutions by focusing on local water security issues.
- The BDO continues to provide administrative support and operate as a key financing channel for the Gram Panchayat

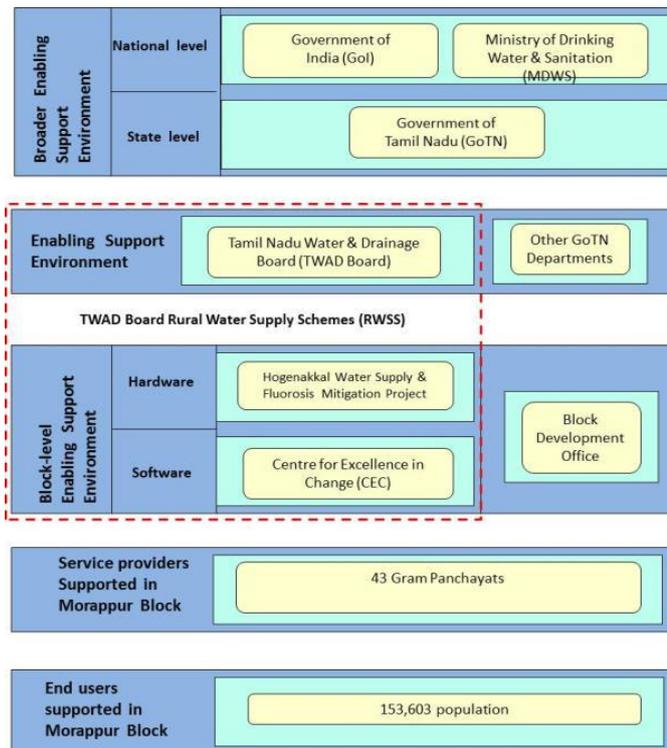


Figure 1: Institutional set-up in Morrapur

Through this complex arrangement, the various support functions were fulfilled, whereby the various organisations complement each other in skills and capacity. However, CEC still lacks a long term planning perspective due to the fact it has a time-limited mandate.

Community service provider

The Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) takes responsibility for the operation, maintenance and administration of the water supply with varying levels of support from the Gram Panchayat and Community Change Management Group (CCGM), with oversight provided through the Gram Sabha, the village assembly. The VWSCs and CCGM are responsible for:

- The Gram Panchayat is responsible in the planning phase, the setting up of user charges, the collection of these and conflict resolution.
- Community Change Management Group (CCGM) are responsible for ensuring Water security measures such as building rainwater harvesting structures and sensitizing community members on water security.
- CCGM also responsible for rainfall monitoring and water quality testing to monitor water security situation in the village.
- CCGM monitor the status of the infrastructure and feed this back to the broader members of the group.
- The funds for capital expenditure are provided Block Development Office.

Service received by households

Service provision takes place through both piped water supply – with significant levels of household connections - and handpumps. The table below presents the service levels received quantity, accessibility, perceived quality, continuity and reliability:

Table 1: Household service levels summary

	Quantity	Accessibility	Water quality perception	Continuity	Reliability
High	20%	94%	100%	0%	100%
Improved	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	18%	4%	0%	100%	0%
Sub-standard	34%	1%	0%	0%	0%
No service	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%

This shows that the type of technology did make a difference, those possessing household connections more likely to receive greater quantities of water, likewise, storage capacity of the household was also a significant determinant. For houses with limited storage capacity, people often use additional water when the supply is turned on, such as for bathing, which is not reflected in data captured.

In terms the association of socio-economic factors with different service levels, it was clear that people from Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe communities were less likely to have a household connection in the three villages where connections existed.

The costs

The costs of this model are spread across a number of financial flows from different institutions, with the exact arrangements not always transparent. Capital costs - of a total of 320 INR/person - are largely done by state water supply agency, the TWAD Board. Community contributions to the initial implementation costs are minor (10%). Of all the capital costs, around 4% is for software support.

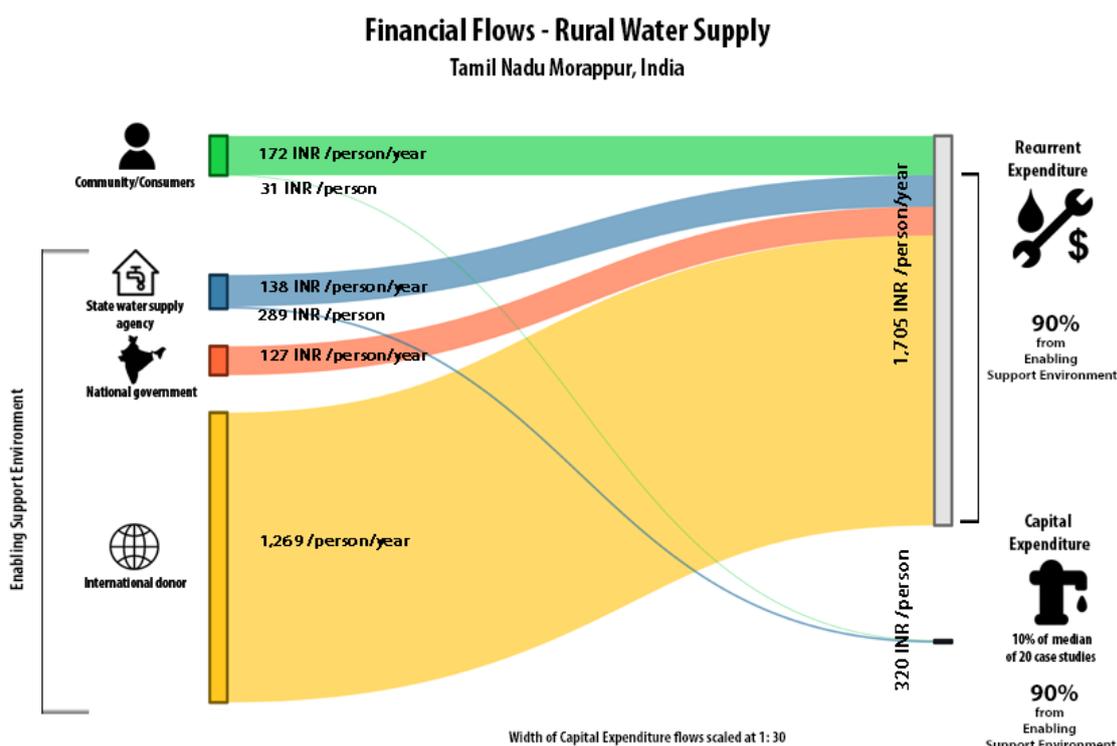


Figure 2: Financial flows for capital and recurrent costs

Recurrent costs are a whopping 1705 INR/person/year of which communities pay around 10%. These are roughly the costs of minor operation and maintenance. The state government's contribution for operation and maintenance is around 8% and the national government's contribution is 7%. But, bulk of the recurrent costs, around 74%, are covered by the international donor. These are the costs of the Hogenakkal bulk supply.

Conclusions

In Morappur, a service delivery arrangement has evolved that straddles the line between public provision by local government and community management. Regardless of the conceptual ambiguity in terms of the classification of the model in the CEC villages, the close relationship between the village-level institutions provides many pragmatic benefits including the easy channelling of funds from the government down to the village-level. This translates into adequate service levels being provided.

However, it does raise questions about the accountability of service provision if the division between the community service provider and elected government is blurred. In this regard, there is a need for the ESE to be sensitive to this risk and to carefully monitor the performance of the community service providers.

This contrasts strongly with finding from neighbouring Maruthipatti, where the Gram Panchayat and VWSC operating without the support of the CCMG. In this village the service levels and degree of community participation were the poorest of all the villages.

However, to come to such high performance and service level, a significant level of investment has been required to develop an effective support model for villages in this area. Withstanding the uneven impact of the support, the HWSFMP model provides an innovative example of how large-scale bulk water provision can be matched with locally managed distribution at the village level.

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 Paul Hutchings. 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.



The research has been funded by the Australian Government through the Australian Development Awards Research Scheme under an award titled Community Management of Rural water Supply Systems in India. The views expressed in this summary sheet are those of the project and not necessarily those of the Australian Government. The Australian Government accepts no responsibility for any loss, damage or injury, resulting from reliance on any of the information or views contained in this summary sheet.

