

### Three interesting features of this case

- As part of the pilot project in 2004-2007, Kathirampatti received emphasis on community participation and a shift in role of water engineers from service 'provider' to 'facilitator', which created sustained community ownership under the efficient Panchayat leadership.
- The Block Development Office is a critical part of the enabling support
- Bulk water supply comes from the enabling support entity with only local distribution being the responsibility of the Gram Panchayat.

### 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

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 Kathirampatti Village Panchayat (VP) in Erode District, where the Panchayat successfully manages the water supply.

In Tamil Nadu 93 per cent of Village Panchayats (VPs) are provided with Piped Water Supply. In Kathirampatti Village Panchayat, the transition from surface water to piped water supply system evolved over a period of three decades and today fully covers all the villages in the Panchayat. The piped water supply is facilitated by government entities that include TWAD (Tamil Nadu Water and Drainage), a dedicated Board which adopts a supply driven support model to ensure potable bulk water reaches the Panchayat. In addition there is the Block Development Office, which assists in channelizing various grants to the Panchayat.

The dependence of piped water on ground water and its over exploitation is seen as threat to the community's water security. Hence, the Panchayat is now using multiple sources and tapping water from the Combined Water Supply Scheme (CWSS), a bulk supply.



## The enabling support environment

The enabling support environment consists of different levels. The State Government, through the TWAD Board, ensures that the potable water from the reaches a tapping point at the Panchayat by taking care of all aspects such as finance, planning, infrastructure design and implementation, and operation and maintenance.

But there is also a role for the Panchayat Raj institutions, particularly in ensuring funding. The Block Development Officer (BDO) of the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department is responsible for capital maintenance and major repair. It plays a facilitators role in getting administrative work sanctioned and grants being disbursed from different sources, such as the Central Finance Commission Grant, State Finance Commission Grants and Schemes and the Pooled Assigned Revenue to meet operation and maintenance (O&M) expense. In case of increased demand the Panchayat and the BDO together identify funding sources.

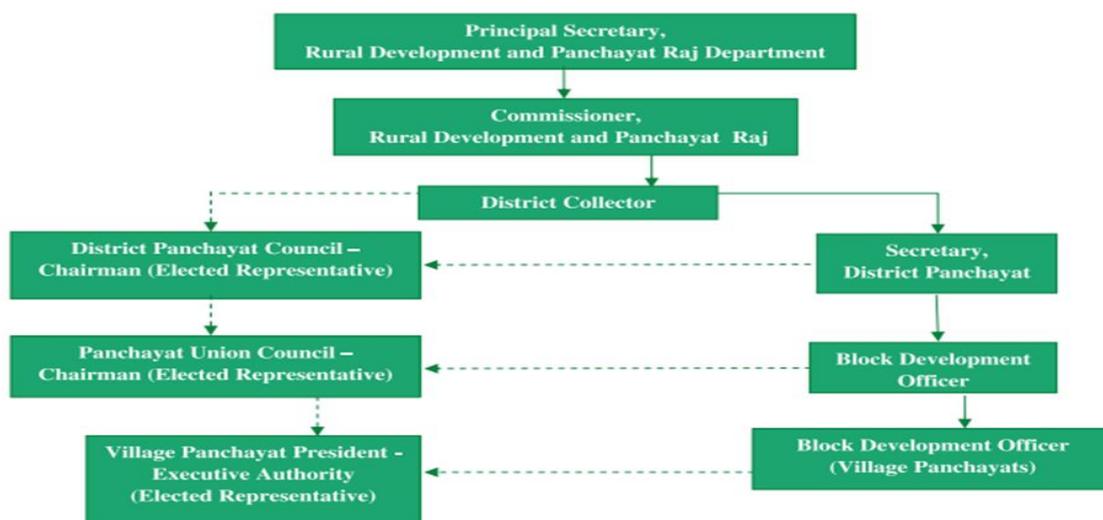


Figure 1: Organogram of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

## Community service provider

The service provider is the VP is. It pays for the water drawn from the bulk supply. Beyond the tapping point, it takes on the responsibility of O&M of the distribution system. It engages a plumber for immediate redressal of complaints.

Kathirampatti VP has a formal Village Water Supply and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) formed in 2004-05 for O&M of the scheme during. After handing over of the project in 2006, VWSC took a back seat. It continues to exist but with limited functions. The Panchayat President as the Chairperson for VWSC and four more members common with the Panchayat, including the Secretary, enables smooth functioning of piped water scheme without any major issues of disagreement.

Presently the VP exercises powers in sanctioning the household service connections, collection of user charges, and keeping an overall watch of the water supply system. VWSC along with community members keep a watch on the use and misuse of water at the household connections, and take action against any misuse immediately.

## Service received by households

Piped water supply is the main drinking water source. Some 20 deep tube wells with overhead tanks cover all the habitations of Kathirampatti Panchayat. There are also some 14 pre-existing handpumps and those are in working condition but are hardly used due to piped water supply and poor water quality.

In terms of service levels the picture is mixed. The amount of supply is high: between 86 and 99 litres per person per day is recorded. Supply is almost exclusively through household connections: 80-100 of households have such connections. But supply is rather irregular, as the duration of water supply varies from 45 minutes to 2 hours in the villages. Equity in service was also apparent, as households at tail end of the distribution line were able to collect their required water with the same time, or even less, as households at the head end.

Table 2: Service levels

	Quantity	Accessibility	Water quality: perception	Continuity	Reliability
High	93%	0%	19%	0%	30%
Improved	3%	13%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	0%	17%	1%	83%	70%
Sub-standard	0%	63%	0%	0%	0%
No service	3%	7%	0%	0%	0%

## The costs

Capital costs amounted to 2,243 INR/person. Of these, some 10% was contributed by communities, in line with prevailing policies in Tamil Nadu. The other 90% of the capital costs were covered by TWAD Board. Most of the recurrent costs are also covered for by the government, either directly by the State government or via the TWAD Board. This includes costs of the bulk supply. User communities only contribute a minor percentage towards the full costs of supply through tariffs.

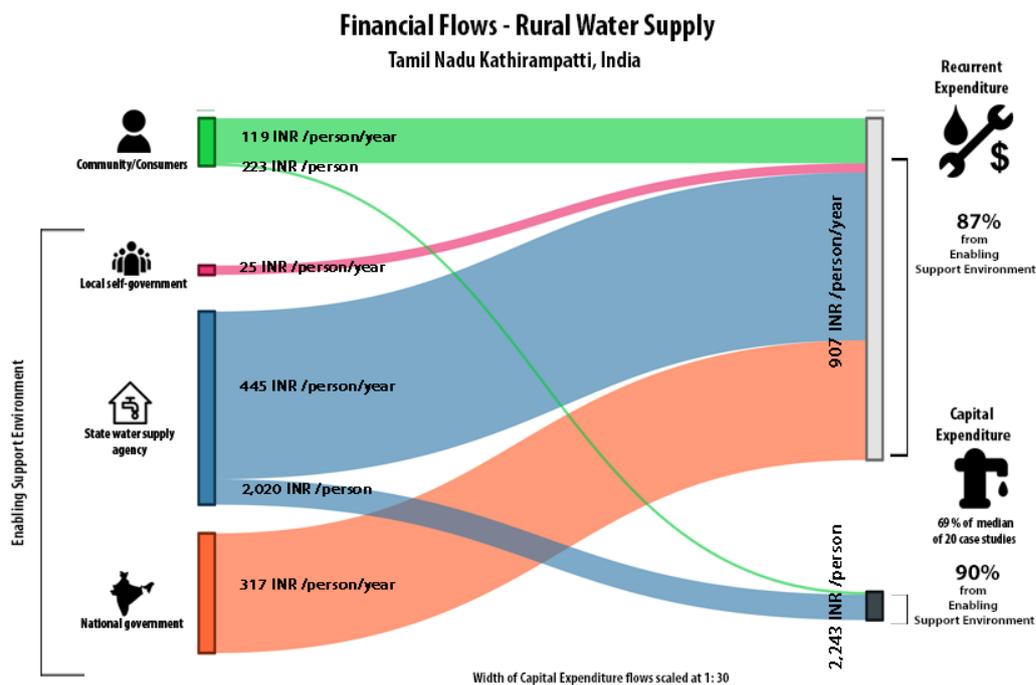


Figure 2: Costs and financial flows towards capital and recurrent costs

## Conclusion

Kathirampatti Panchayat was part of a pilot project to improve rural water supply in Tamil Nadu. That pilot project put strong emphasis on emphasis on community participation and a shift in role of water engineers from service 'provider' to 'facilitator', which created sustained community ownership under the efficient Panchayat leadership. This resulted in the Panchayat becoming the effective service providers in Kathirampatti. Though a VWSC exists, its role is minimal. It is really the Panchayat administration itself that runs the service.

But in this it gets significant support from the enabling support environment. On the one side TWAD Board provides technical support in aspects of capital maintenance and operation and maintenance. On the other side, the Block Development Office plays an essential role in fund mobilization for rural water supply from different government sources.

This is also seen in the financial flow diagrammes, which indicate that the majority of funds for recurrent costs come from the government.

The Panchayat maintains a high level of service with reliable potable water of more than 80 lpcd, and 80 per cent to 100 per cent household connections. But limited reliability is a concern, as is water resources management. To overcome overdependence on groundwater, the Panchayat is using multiple water sources and a bulk supply for sustained and reliable supply of potable water to the community in the long run.

## 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 Rema Saraswathy, and the summary 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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