

Water Supply and Sanitation Programme

of the

Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development

INTRODUCTION

1. Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development was established in 1980 to accelerate the local development activities with the active participation of local people through-out the Country. So community participation is one of the basic element in this ministry's programme. Under this local development programme, this ministry is presently engaged in planning and implementing the minor irrigation projects, small scale water supply and sanitation projects, trail improvements, suspension bridges and school improvement projects etc. As you all know, this Kingdom is divided into five development regions, 75 districts, 4022 village panchayats and 29 town panchayats. This Ministry has its institutional links upto village level through its regional and district offices. District panchayat secretariat and village panchayat offices are the district and village offices through which most of the local development activities are being carried out.

2. Under this local development activities, rural water supply has received a high priority, since water is a basic need of the rural communities. So most of the development programmes have included water supply as one of the important components of the package.

The important programmes of this Ministry are mentioned briefly as follows:

a. Grant-in-Aid Programme

Under this programme, this Ministry grants a lump-sum amount to each district panchayat and town panchayat on the basis of the population, remoteness and the availability of the local resources. The district and town panchayats along with their own resources, make plans and implement the local development projects. The district panchayats have so far

utilized this fund mainly in constructing the small scale irrigation, water supply projects, local bridges and schools and panchayat buildings. This programme is basically based on the felt needs of the local panchayats and community participation play a major role in all stages from planning to implementation. This programme covers all the districts and implementation is carried out by the panchayats and user's committees with the support of district technical office which also comes under MPLD. It is estimated that during the last Sixth Plan, 3000 water supply schemes have been completed and benefits have reached to nearly 1 million population of the country. The pressing need of water supply projects can be envisaged from the number of projects asked for the 7th Plan. In the 5 years plans of the districts so far received have shown nearly the demand for 9000 water supply projects.

Under this programme, however many water supply projects have been implemented and completed, there is a need of improving the quality of the project and strong mechanism to operate and maintain the already completed projects. So the Ministry has instructed all district panchayats to allocate 10 percent of the total grants-in-aid fund for maintenance purposes.

For the 7th Plan, 100 million rupees have been allocated for this programme.

b. Integrated Rural Development

Presently the eight integrated rural development projects are being implemented. The ninth IRD project for Seti Zone is also coming into operation in near future. These projects are multisectoral projects with Local Development as one of the components. Under these projects, district panchayats are involved in planning and implementation of water supply schemes.

c. Community Water Supply and Sanitation Programme

The Community Water Supply Project was started in 1971 with UNICEF's assistance and WHO's collaboration. This programme consists of piped water supply systems (gravity-fed) and shallow tubewells fitted with handpumps. In this programme UNCDF, EEC and SATA are providing necessary funds through UNICEF. Presently this programme covers 38 hill districts for gravity systems and three terai districts for tubewells and four locations of four districts for sanitation pilot projects. The implementation responsibility of this programme as per Decentralization Act is being transferred to district panchayat from the

regional directors office. However logistic and technical support from the regional directorate to district panchayat will continue to the period when district panchayat and district technical office fully develop their capability.

d. Remote Area Development and Others

In order to give special attention to the development of 18 northern remote districts, this programme is being implemented for more than 1 1/2 decades. The Remote Area Development Committee at central level chaired by the Panchayat and Local Development Minister finalizes the projects to be implemented at districts. Projects are generally formulated on the basis of proposal received from the district panchayats. Water supply is also one area where assistance is provided from this programme. Implementation of this programme is also carried out from district panchayat and technical support from district technical office with additional manpower for this programme.

3. Besides this, there are other number of programmes and projects, such as Resource Conservation, Praja Development, Women's Development\* and Special Programmes which also are implementing water supply projects in a limited scale.

PROVISION OF FACILITIES

4. MPLD's main emphasis in all development programme is community participation in kind and/or in cash. With recent introduction of the Decentralization Act in 1985/86 planning procedure of MPLD has a significant characteristics of initiation by involvement of beneficiaries. The communities have to identify their felt needs and whereby drinking water being a basic need of their day to day life, is generally given high priority.

4.1) Planning

The following procedure is being followed in planning stage:

- a. The communities through their wards have to submit their proposal to the Village Panchayat describing the possible source of water, rough estimate of the proposed system and commitment of their contribution.
- b. The village panchayats collect and compile these proposals and submit to the village assembly for selection and prioritization in yearly and 5 year plans.

- c. The lists of the proposed systems which are selected by the village assembly are forwarded to district panchayats. The district panchayat secretariat compile these lists and submit to the different planning committees. The district panchayat finally submits to district assembly for approval and prioritization.
- d. The proposed systems finally selected and prioritized are forwarded to regional directorates and the ministry.
- e. MPLD submits the proposals to National Planning Commission (NPC) for approval and to Ministry of Finance for budget allocation.
- f. After obtaining the approval and budget allocation the funds are released to District Panchayats for implementation.

#### 4.2 Feasibility Studies and Designs

As has been afore-mentioned the district assembly is the final authority and once a proposal is approved by the district assembly, investigation for feasibility and survey for design are carried out for all proposals mostly by the District Technical Office of MPLD. But however in Community Water Supply and Sanitation Project (CWSS) feasibility studies and survey design are carried by the technical staff of Regional Directorates and in the case of some IRDPs the Project Coordinator Office carries out survey and design activities in collaboration with concerned District Technical Office and District Panchayat.

#### 4.3 Implementation

In most of the programmes, the district panchayats are responsible for construction with the technical assistance provided by the District Technical Office. In the case of the CWSS the field office and regional office are responsible for construction whereas this in some IRDP responsibility lies with Project Coordinator Office. But from this year implementation responsibility is being transferred to the District Panchayats according to the Decentralisation Act.

#### PROGRAMMERS, BUDGETS

5. It has been already mentioned that there are a number of programmes purely or partially involved in water supply and sanitation sector. The profile document has dealt with it in general and detailed achievement could be mentioned as below:

5.1 Programme

	<u>Sixth Plan</u>		<u>Seventh Plan</u>
	<u>No. of Project</u>	<u>Pop. Cov.</u>	<u>Pop to be covered</u>
- Grant-inAids	3 000	1 000 000	750 000
- Community Water Supply and Sanitation	354	452 304	575 000
- Integrated Rural Development	590	296 395	222 300
- Remote Area Development	50	34 531	25 900
- Praja Development	32	4 600	3 500
	<u>4 026</u>	<u>1 787 830</u>	<u>1 576 700</u>

5.2 Budgets

The budget available during the two Five Year Plans are shown below in million rupees:

	<u>Sixth Plan</u>	<u>Seventh Plan</u>
- Piped water supply	277 991	330 000
- Tubewell	<u>8 254</u>	<u>10 000</u>
- Total	286 245	340 000

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

6. MPLD's objective is to mobilize resources of communities to bring them up to the stage of self-reliance. In view of this objective responsibility to operate and maintain the completed water supply facilities is entrusted to the beneficiaries. In CWSS programme, a local maintenance worker is trained during the implementation stage. And this maintenance worker is also given simple maintenance training so that he would be equipped with the skill to keep the project going and maintain properly in future. After completion of the project, the basic tools and few spare parts for repair are provided to the maintenance worker who is appointed by the users committee of the village and paid by the beneficiaries in cash or kind. However, there is a limit that the local people could bear the cost of the maintenance work. So if a certain damage occurs to the project and whose maintenance is beyond the capacity of local people, the regional directorate through its field offices provides assistance for maintenance and repair including the technical support from it. So there is already follow-up system about the completed projects in CWSS programme.

7. In Grant-in-Aid and other programme, however there is a need to establish a well organized operation and maintenance system. For a lot of projects after few months or years of completion are found to be not

functioning properly. Here also arises a need of employing a maintenance worker as a part time local worker and giving him training and equipping him with simple basic tools and spare parts. So the thought is being given to establish a 'Maintenance and Operation Cell' in each district and equipping it with tools and spare parts and technical manpower so that the operation and maintenance work could be given due attention by the district. This is also an area where we look forward for your cooperation and assistance.

CONSTRAINTS

8. Despite the several constraints, MPLD has achieved its set target. Now to meet the decade target for the 7th Plan, one of the major constraints is a shortage of external resources. However there are other constraints such as inadequate technical manpower, operation, maintenance problems, transport difficulties, sources disputes and quality protection, release of funds which all have attracted our serious concern. Hope some remedies could be work out with the assistance of our donor partners.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

9. As has been mentioned above MPLD is responsible for multisectoral development of rural communities and as such the technical staff, professional as well as sub-professional have to be engaged in different types of construction activities such as construction of suspension bridges, schools, tracks, etc. But the time they spend is more in water supply works than in any other of those activities. At present the total technical manpower of MPLD is 1148 which can categorized as below:

- Professionals 143
- Sub-professionals 555
- Technicians 450

10. It is MPLD's one of the major objectives to give adequate trainings to the staff to improve their performance and capabilities by providing further studies abroad as well as in the country and also by conducting in-service trainings. MPLD has five Panchayat Training Centres. These training centres are also training technical assistants to work with the village panchayats. During the Sixth Plan MPLD has trained its technical staff in the field of water supply and sanitation as below:

	<u>Abroad</u>	<u>In-service</u>
- Post-graduate	10	-
- Graduate	13	32
- Sub-professional	-	293

11. Observation tours are also being provided to suitable staff to study development and improvements in other countries.

12. MPLD is in constant endeavour to improve its training facilities. In this connection MPLD has already suggested WHO to incorporate some activities and to budget some funds in Phase II of Training of Manpower for the Drinking Water and Sanitation Programme. MPLD is also seeking financial assistance to carry out a study to evaluate the performance, skill and usefulness of training given to Technical Assistants by the Panchayat Training Centres of MPLD. Since these technical assistants are responsible to assist the village panchayats in feasibility studies, investigation, implementation and maintenance of all construction works their role is important in implementation of development programmes.

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

#### 13. Present Situation

It has been mentioned in several plans that all development programmes under MPLD are community based wherefore people's participation and contribution are an essential component. At present community participation, although it is a must, needs to be improved in the case of planning and operation and maintenance. There have been some programmes in the past in which concerned communities were not properly involved in the planning stage, and there are many completed water supply systems whose operation and maintenance are not fully taken care of by the benefited communities. The case studies have highlighted this prevailing situation and therefore MPLD, as mentioned previously is planning to establish operation and maintenance cells in the districts. At present, the local people through the user's committee provide voluntary labour for unskilled work like digging trench for pipe and digging and collecting local materials for reservoir, tanks, etc.

It is envisaged by MPLD that with the Decentralization Act currently enforced, community participation will be more defined and better materialized in near future.

### CONCLUSION

14. During the 6th Plan MPLD has achieved more than the Decade Plan targets. According to the original Decade Plan and updated population projection MPLD is responsible to cover additional population of 9.1 percent of the total rural population. But MPLD's achievement was 11.7 percent. In spite of such achievement MPLD has been interested to have clear picture of operation and maintenance conditions of completed water supply facilities, and also performance of project implementation in terms of cost and time so that improvements could be developed. With this objective MPLD has already completed a case study to review the existing drinking water supply projects under MPLD with special reference to Grant-in-Aids projects. A second study to evaluate operation and maintenance of water supply facilities in one district is also on-going. MPLD envisages to identify areas where improvement could be developed basing on the findings and recommendations of these case studies.