

Community involvement in a multi-village scheme in Amravati district

Maharashtra

Three interesting features of this case

- Technology adapted to natural topography, saving high on energy costs.
- State Government Policy to support the MJP's Scheme, provides incentives.
- Professionalized and trained employees.

Key data on the Maharashtra context

All India data for reference in parenthesis

Water supply coverage: 98% (96%)

GDP per capita: \$6,679 (\$4,243)

HDI: 0.572 (0.467)

Devolution Index rank: 3 out of 24

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY

Community Water ^{plus}

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 Maharashtra Jeevan Pradhikaran case.

High groundwater salinity in the Purna River Basin of Amravati, Akola, and Buldhana districts in Maharashtra makes it unfit for human consumption. The region is also prone to drought due to which drinking water is scarce. Since 2001 Maharashtra Jeevan Pradhikaran (MJP), a government body, is providing piped water supply through a large scale multi-village scheme to 156 villages and two towns in Amravati District. This is done using surface water from the nearby Shahanoor Irrigation Dam and using gravity-flow, as that is best adapted to the terrain, and saves on costs. The scheme has resulted in better water service provision in the rural areas of the district and achieved 100 per cent metered household connections.

The model is one of direct public service provision by MJP, but in which communities play a key oversight role in order for MJP to perform its role.



Enabling support environment

MJP generally handovers the smaller schemes it creates to local governments (Zilla Parishad) and takes care of the larger ones itself, including the multi-village scheme in this case study. This implies that in the larger schemes, MJP is both the implementer and the service provider. It is thus the main organization responsible for capital maintenance and asset renewal. But it is also responsible for day-to-day operation and maintenance (O&M). In order to do so, it contracts time-keepers and valve-men at the village level.

This implies that the working model of MJP is supply driven. It creates schemes, prepares action plans and identifies the budgetary requirements, conducts daily monitoring of service levels, periodic water quality testing, water source management and strengthening and addressing any sort of conflict management arising with respect to water quantity.

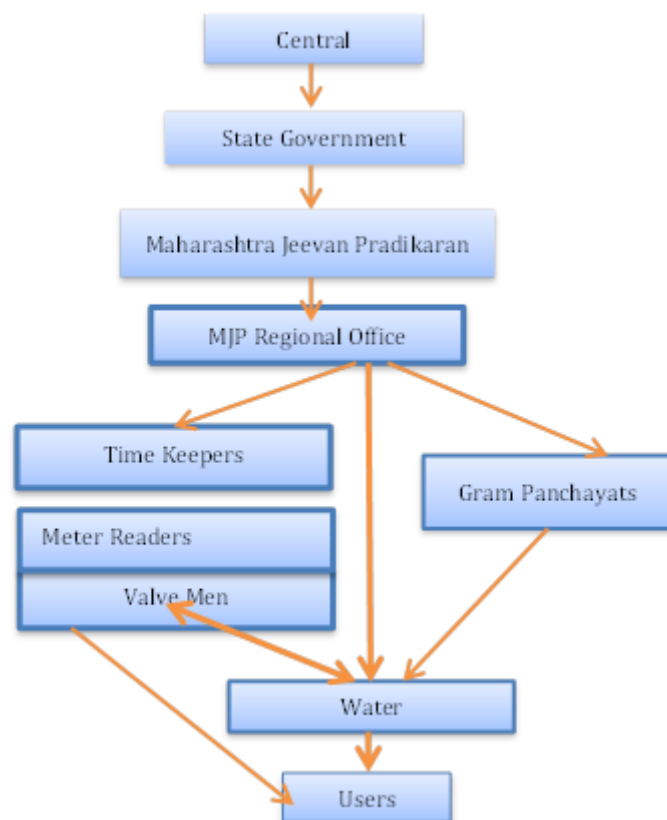


Figure 1: Institutional model of MJP

Responsibility of central government involves approving budget of water projects and disbursing the same. Project cost is shared equally by central and state government, which is 50 percent each.

Community service provider

Even though Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) are formed in the villages during the implementation stage, their role of VWSC is very limited. They cannot be considered a service provider, as the MJP carries out almost all O&M tasks. Rather, the VWSC play a watch dog and oversight role by keeping an eye on MJP's performance. It checks the misuse of metered connections at household levels and steps in and helps MJP in tariff collection from problematic households. This extra effort by VWSCs creates an efficient complaint redressal system.

Success in a village is attributed to the efficient working model between the three stakeholders – MJP, VWSC and the community. Where there is no presence of a VWSC, service levels are often low. But, this could also be the case, because these communities are often in the tail-end of the system..

Service received by households

Though this mechanism is essentially one of direct public service provision with minimal community involvement, service levels are high, in terms of the quantity, quality and continuity of supply evident from the table below. Moreover, MJP has achieved 100 per cent metered household connections.

Table 1: Service levels in assessed villages

Service Level	Quantity	Accessability	Quality	Continuity	Reliability
High	36%	100%	100%	0%	100%
Improved	34%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Basic	30%	0%	0%	100%	0%
sub-standard	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
no service	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Overall there is equity within villages, given that almost all users in the village get the same level of services. However, equity across villages is a concern. This is witnessed by the problems in the tail-end villages, where service levels are much lower.

The costs

Capital costs are almost entirely covered by the Government, through a combination of national government funds and ones from the MJP. There is a small contribution from the Maharashtra State Government. Total capital costs are very high at 17,870 INR/person.

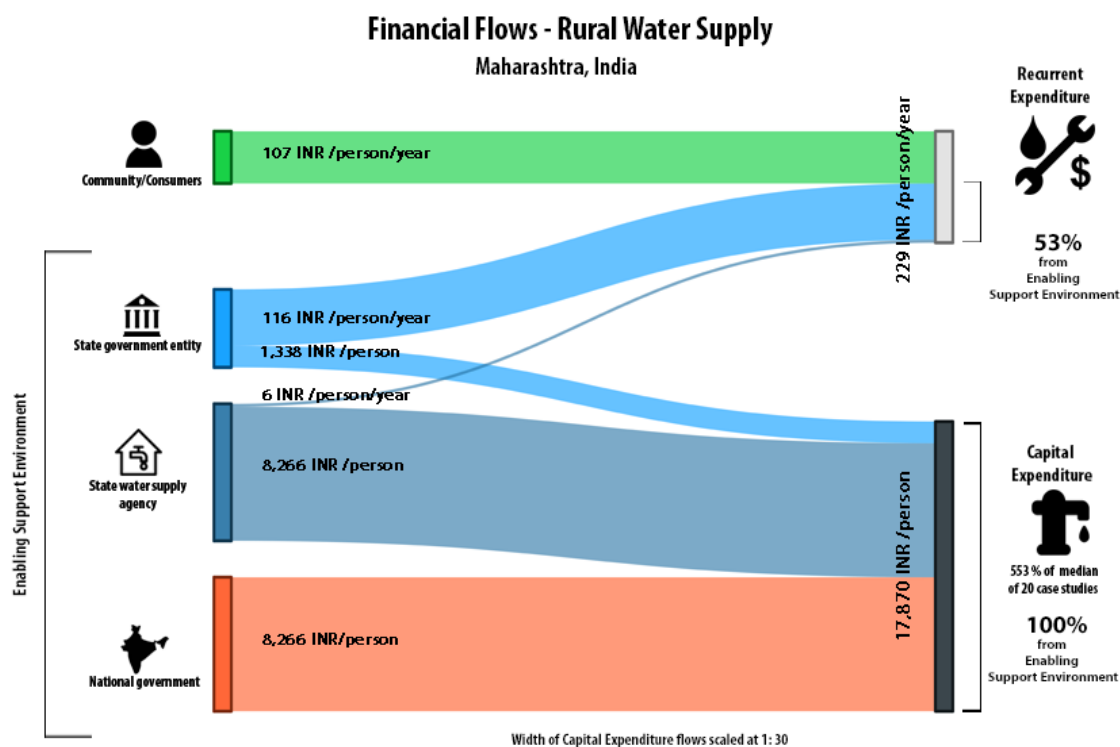


Figure 2: Costs and financial flows of the MJP

With respect to recurrent costs, MJP has to recover at least 90 per cent of the O&M costs through tariff collection. However, in reality, around only about half of the recurrent costs come from tariffs, as these recurrent costs don't only include the ones related to O&M, but also to capital replacement and support. While MJP manages O&M from household tariffs collected by the Bill collectors employed by it, in case of shortage of funds, the Government of Maharashtra provides support to meet the expenditure.

Conclusion

In response to the groundwater salinity problem in salinity in the Purna River Basin of Amravati, Akola, and Buldhana districts in Maharashtra, MJP has developed a gravity-fed multi-village scheme serving some 156 villages. This scheme is entirely managed by MJP, acting both as an implementer and a service provider. It fulfils the latter role by taking care of capital maintenance, as well as of daily O&M. It has time keepers and valve men in most of the villages for that task. These are also responsible for tariff collection. Community's easy access to MJP's staff (time keeper and valve men) ensures high complaint redressal. These people generally being from same village or neighbouring villages are perceived to be trustworthy.

Each village also has a VWSC, but its role is rather limited, and consists of supporting tariff collection and acting a liaison between villagers and the MJP staff.

As a result, high level of service are provided through metered household connections. However, there are big differences between villages, with those located in the tail-end getting very low service levels.

This scheme is entirely funded by the Government of Maharashtra, which extends its full support to scheme and contributes financial resources in the form of incentives to meet O&M in case of shortage of funds received from tariff collection. Currently, around half of the recurrent costs come from tariffs, the remainder from government.

The model with OpEx met from tariff collection illustrates the classic example of a shift in the nature of services where professionalized support is sought out with contributions from the community. This model is more evident in urban setting where the community involvement is more in the form of tariff.

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 Srinivas Chary Vedala, Shaili Jasthi and Swapna Uddaraju and 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.



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.

