

See Hindi Version of the [Query](#)  
See Hindi Version of the [Summary](#) (available from 12 December 2008)



## Decentralization Community



## Water Community

### Solution Exchange for the Decentralization Community

### Solution Exchange for the Water Community

### Consolidated Reply

#### *Query: Water Service Delivery by Panchayats - Experiences*

Compiled by [Joy Elamon](#) and [Nitya Jacob](#), Resource Persons and [Tina Mathur](#) and [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associates

Issue Date: 05 December 2008

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#### From [Puneet Srivastava](#), GTZ, Shimla

Posted 23 October 2008

I work with Indo German Bilateral Project namely Capacity Building of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Himachal Pradesh. The Panchayati Raj and Irrigation and Public Health Departments of the Government of Himachal Pradesh have signed this bilateral cooperation project with GTZ (GTZ Technical cooperation) with the objective that "the legal, institutional, human resources and fiscal framework conditions are adjusted to the needs of effective decentralization."

Under this project, we are in the process of Activity Mapping (identification of activities related to functions devolved to panchayats) with some key departments including Department of Irrigation and Public health which is responsible for delivery of rural water supply in the state. Most states are decentralizing rural water supply, and a discussion on the issue will be useful for identifying appropriate ways of water service delivery by panchayats.

In this context, I would like to request members to share there experiences with regard to the following three key areas.

1. Current *experiences of decentralized rural water supply service delivery* by panchayats (including the phases of planning, implementation, operation and maintenance) across rural water supply schemes
2. Successful examples of *social audit systems* in the delivery of rural water supply

3. Appropriate *institutional arrangements* for delivery of rural water supply within the three tier Panchayati Raj Institutions framework, considering financial viability and public accountability?

We would be interested in knowing international experiences and examples on these issues too.

I look forward to receive the valuable comments of the members of the Community. Your inputs would help us in finding a way forward in water service delivery by panchayats.

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### Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [Rajesh K. Sood](#), National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai
2. [Kalyan Paul](#), Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation, Ranikhet
3. [Ramakrishna Nallathiga](#), Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad
4. [Vinod Kumar](#), Maithri, Palakkad
5. [Jyotsna Bapat](#), Consultant, New Delhi
6. [Amit Kumar Singh](#), Water Testing Lab, Karnal
7. [Avinash Zutshi](#), Feedback Ventures Pvt Ltd, Gurgaon
8. [Neelima Garg](#), Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun
9. [Arun Jindal](#), Society for Sustainable Development, Karauli
10. [Dipak Roy](#), UNICEF, New Delhi
11. [K.K Krishnakumar](#), Centre for Socio-economic and Environmental Studies(CSES), Kochi
12. [Romit Sen](#), Water Aid, New Delhi
13. [Asad Umar](#), Water Aid (UK)-India Liaison Office West, Bhopal
14. [Rema Saraswathy](#), Institute of Sustainable Development, Chennai
15. [Nabaneeta Rudra](#), Mott MacDonald Pvt. Ltd., Noida
16. [Amitabh Mukhopadhyay](#), Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi
17. [Arunabha Majumder](#), Jadavpur University, Kolkata
18. [Dinesh Kumar](#), Institute for Resource Analysis and Policy, Hyderabad
19. [Manish Kumar](#), Nationalist Kisan Congress, Uttar Pradesh\*

*\*Offline Contribution*

*Further contributions are welcome!*

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### Summary of Responses

The query on water service delivery by panchayats drew insights from members on some successful experiences in decentralized water service delivery by panchayats and institutional arrangements for delivery of rural water supply. Members also mentioned experiences with social audit systems in this sector. Discussants cited water services models to highlight the successful institutional arrangements as well as the hurdles faced by local governments in delivery of water.

### Institutional Arrangements

Ensuring efficient service delivery and water quality is a full time activity and beyond the purview of a single agency, said some members, suggesting an inter-sectoral framework for the same. However, respondents also realized that the division of activities between the panchayats and the Irrigation/Public Health and Engineering departments in some states such as [Rajasthan](#) may not work very effectively if not streamlined. Anomalies are likely to arise in such scenarios where staff is employed by panchayats but supervised by line departments or if central schemes are implemented by panchayats through Village Water and Sanitation Committees but under the supervision of departmental technical staff. Citing successful cases, members mentioned the [AP Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project](#) where operation and maintenance of hand pumps and water supply schemes is transferred to gram panchayats alongwith the resources. The Project Management Unit as the resource organization for sectoral reforms under the Sector Wide Approaches is another useful institutional arrangement. One more successful arrangement is the delivery of treated water by the Project and maintenance by Pani Panchayats (see [Aapni Yojana](#) experience). Respondents also cited the experience with the Jalswarajya project in [Maharashtra](#), where it is being operationalized at the village level through three sub-committees and the Gram Sabha. This has resulted in improved accountability and systems of accounting, record keeping and a sensitized community.

### **Social Audit Systems**

Respondents recognized the criticality of social audit in the process of water service delivery. Not only is an independent or community audit essential to monitor management and delivery of the service, but also the monitoring of water quality and sustainability. Participants agreed that community based water quality management systems are needed. Jan Sunvai and community audit must be inbuilt in water delivery schemes as a critical feedback point. Social Audit has been successfully built into projects such as Aapni Yojana and [Jalswarajya](#) as well as the [Swajal](#) projects in Uttarakhand. Discussants also highlighted the social audit methodologies in other development projects such as NREGA and PDS. Some successful social audit examples are also available in Kerala in projects such as Jeevadhara. The [Community Scorecard](#) methodology has also been found useful in cases such as the AP Rural Poverty Project; these methodologies could be deployed in water management through panchayats as well. Members emphasized the need to have separate agencies for delivering the service and monitoring it.

### **Impediments/Hurdles in successful water service delivery by panchayats**

Incomplete devolution of funds, functions and functionaries is a major hurdle in panchayats to deliver water services effectively and accountably, members observed. Additionally, capacities of panchayats to plan implement and monitor water schemes are limited and in many states they are working like contractors of the state. The question of water charges is also a sensitive one, according to members, (see [Ethiopia](#) experience) adding to the difficulties in water management by local governments.

### **Suggestions**

Respondents suggested that the choice of technology is an important factor impacting the management and sustainability of water systems. Moreover, successful water service delivery models would be those which would be of local relevance. Incentives like the Nirmal Gram Puraskar also help in better water management. Additionally, respondents agreed that local government members must be trained on the water management techniques and requirements in order to function effectively.

Members concluded that there are several successful models of water service delivery by panchayats, but further improvement is possible with effective devolution of powers to panchayats, building their capacities in water management and effective community participation and monitoring.

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## Comparative Experiences

### National

#### Rajasthan

**Dual control over water service delivery is inconducive** (from [Arun Jindal](#), *Society for Sustainable Development, Karauli*)

In Rajasthan, the panchayats have not been given full control over water service delivery. Planning is done by panchayats but implementation is through the Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED). Similarly hand pump repair staff is under panchayats but supervised by the PHED. This arrangement has led to the slowing of scheme implementation as the panchayats seem to be working more as contractors with no real control.

**Aapni Yojana provides replicable example in community managed water services** (from [Dipak Roy](#), *UNICEF, New Delhi*)

The scheme has been implemented in three water scarce districts aimed at providing piped water supply and improving the health of the community. The institutional structure has been found to work very well with community participation through a Community Participation Unit, Water and Health Committees and Paani Panchayats to solve disputes. This is an experience that could be replicated in other states. [Read more](#)

#### Maharashtra

**Jalswarajya aids community sensitization** (from [Asad Umar](#), *Water Aid UK- India Liaison Office West, Bhopal*)

Jalswarajaya provides an example of successful decentralized water service delivery through sub-committees. The decision making is done by the Gram Sabha while the Social Audit Committee is responsible for monitoring the project. The integrated approach of water supply, hygiene and sanitation has aided community sensitization and the reform initiative has resulted in many villages emerging as successful community base models in WATSAN. [Read more](#)

#### Haryana

**Water supply by panchayats shows poor results** (from [Amit Kumar Singh](#), *Water Testing Lab, Karnal*)

In Haryana, water supply systems have been handed over to the panchayats. However, problems have emerged including failure of water supply due to non payment of bills, people not being ready to pay water cess and poor quality of monitoring by panchayats. The problems are severe enough to lead to water contamination, which has resulted in the government planning to retake charge of water service delivery.

### International

#### Africa

**Community management and distribution of water for a cost, Ethiopia** (from [Nabaneeta Rudra](#), *Mott MacDonald Pvt. Ltd., NOIDA*)

The availability of water has been a major problem in the village of Bordede. The village is governed by village level bodies and grassroots level political officer similar to the Indian Gram

Panchayats. The water management is done by the community. However the levy of the water charge has resulted in a burden for the poor villagers due to the heavy cost of water.

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## Related Resources

### *Recommended Documentation*

From [Ramakrishna Nallathiga](#), Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad

#### **Operational Manual for Implementing the Community Scorecard Process**

Manual; by Janmejy Singh, Supriya Kumar and Parmesh Shah; World Bank; Maharashtra Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) Jalswarajya Project; Maharashtra; 2004

Available at

<http://www.sasanet.org/documents/Case%20Studies/Accountability%20in%20Maharashtra%20RWSS.pdf> (PDF; Size: 952 KB)

*Provides implementation guidelines for community-based performance and expenditure tracking for water and sanitation projects through scorecards*

#### **India - Water resources management sector review : Rural Water Supply and Sanitation report**

Report; by World Bank; January 1998

Available at

[http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/main?menuPK=64187510&pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000009265\\_3980901105844](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/main?menuPK=64187510&pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000009265_3980901105844) (PDF; Size: 8.33MB)

*Addresses need to devolve decision-making powers relating to water and sanitation projects to Panchayats, who will have incentive and opportunity to initiate prompt action*

From [K.K Krishnakumar](#), Centre for Socio-economic and Environmental Studies (CSES), Kochi

#### **People's Initiative in Water - Olavanna Village in Kerala, India Shows the Way**

Paper; by Joy Elamon in 'Reclaiming Public Waters' ; Transnational Institute; The Netherlands; 2005;

Available at <http://www.tni.org/books/waterindia.pdf> (PDF; Size: 97.7KB)

*Presents case study on how drinking water projects were successfully initiated in the state of Kerala with the involvement of local panchayats*

#### **'Olavanna model' water schemes come in for praise**

Article; The Hindu; Khozikode; March 2005;

Available at <http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/23/stories/2005032307290300.htm>

*Describes the drinking water projects initiated by the Olavanna Gram Panchayat, with public participation, which received commendations, including that of the World Bank*

From [Rema Saraswathy](#), Institute of Sustainable Development, Chennai

#### **Global water crisis: Partnerships for the future**

Article; by Vibhu Nayar and V. Suresh; The Hindu; November 2008;

Available at

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2008/11/02/stories/2008110250010100.htm>

*Discusses how Public Public Partnerships (PUPs) for water service delivery have achieved success by forging dynamic relationships between panchayats and communities.*

### **Needed, a paradigm shift**

Article; by Vibhu Nayar and V. Suresh; The Hindu; October 2008;

Available

at

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2008/10/26/stories/2008102650130400.htm>

*Advocates that only new initiatives between state institutions, such as panchayats and the citizen, based on transparency, can ensure fair access to water for everyone*

### **Social Auditing and its relevance to Audit of Public Utilities** (from [Dinesh Kumar](#), Institute for Resource Analysis and Policy, Hyderabad)

Article; by M. Parthasarathy; Asian Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions; New Delhi

Available at [http://www.asosai.org/journal1988/social\\_audit\\_and\\_its\\_relevance.htm](http://www.asosai.org/journal1988/social_audit_and_its_relevance.htm)

*Describes how social audits examine the impact of specific governmental activities on sections of the society which are in contact with government agencies*

From [Tina Mathur](#), Research Associate

### **Improving Panchayat service delivery through Community Scorecards**

Brief; World Bank; August 2007

Available at

<http://www->

[wds.worldbank.org/servlet/main?menuPK=64187510&pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000020953\\_20071121135935](http://wds.worldbank.org/servlet/main?menuPK=64187510&pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000020953_20071121135935)

*Discusses the application of specific social accountability tools in the water sector through case studies in the Jalswarajya Project*

### **Rural Water Supply and Sanitation**

Book; by World Bank South Asia Regional Office, Rural Development Sector Unit, India Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, DANIDA; World Bank Publications; 1999

Available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

*Discusses issues such as protection of water sources, institutional performance, and sector reform strategy in the context of water service delivery in panchayat areas*

### **Sustainable Environmental Sanitation and Water Services- Wither Partnership**

Paper; by V.L Prasad; CDS-APARD; 28<sup>th</sup> WEDC Conference; Kolkata; 2002

Available at <http://wedc.lboro.ac.uk/conferences/pdfs/28/Prasad2.pdf> (PDF; Size: 463.88 KB)

*Examines the sector reform approach and makes the case for partnerships in rural water service delivery*

From [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate

### **And Who Will Make the Chapatis?**

Book; by Bisakha Datta; The South Asian Women's Network; Kolkata; 2001

Available at

<http://www.sawnet.org/books/reviews.php?And+Who+Will+Make+the+Chapatis%3F>

*A Study of all-women panchayats in Maharashtra, presents a case study of a Sarpanch who brought piped water supply to Harijan quarters*

### **Safe and Sustainable Clean Water Access**

Book; by Daniel Bachhuber; Whitman Direct Action; Whitman College; Washington DC; 2008

Available at <http://www.indiawaterportal.org/tt/dwm/case/WDA2008WaterBook.pdf> (PDF Size: 1.72 MB)

*Aims to address obstacles to clean water access in rural India, provides several cases studies of decentralised drinking water supply involving panchayats and communities*

## **Pani Panchayat in Orissa, India: The practice of participatory water management**

Article; by Basanta Kumar Sahu; Palgrave Macmillan; England; March 2008

Available at

<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/pal/dev/2008/00000051/00000001/art00021>

*Argues the need for strengthening existing local institutions such as panchayats, for ensuring equity in water access leading to better development of water resources*

### ***Recommended Organizations and Programmes***

From [Rajesh K. Sood](#), National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai

#### **Department of Drinking Water Supply, New Delhi**

9th Floor, Paryavarn Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003; Tel: 91-11-24361043; Fax: 91-11-24364113; [jstm@water.nic.in](mailto:jstm@water.nic.in); <http://ddws.nic.in/arwsp.htm>

*Initiated the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme to assist the States and Union Territories (UTs) to accelerate the pace of coverage of drinking water supply*

#### **Communication and Capacity Development Unit, New Delhi**

9th Floor, Paryavarn Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003; Tel: 91-11-24361043; Fax: 91-11-24364113; [jstm@water.nic.in](mailto:jstm@water.nic.in); <http://ddws.nic.in/CCDU.htm>

*Mandated to develop communication tools and implementation of the water and sanitation programme involving community participation, across the country*

From [Ramakrishna Nallathiga](#), Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad

#### **Andhra Pradesh Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project (APRWSSP), Hyderabad**

J- Block, 6th Floor, Secretariat, Hyderabad; Tel: 91-40-23390302; Fax: 91-40-23319676  
[eic\\_rwss@ap.gov.in](mailto:eic_rwss@ap.gov.in); <http://aprwss.gov.in/html/aprwssp-ap.htm>

*Supports and finances infrastructure investments required to improve access to water supply and sanitation services to rural communities of Andhra Pradesh*

#### **The World Bank, Washington DC, USA**

70 Lodi Estate, New Delhi-110 003; Tel: 91-11-24617241; Fax: 91-11-24619393  
[lguerrero@worldbank.org](mailto:lguerrero@worldbank.org); <http://www.worldbank.org.in/>

*Focuses on investing in people through better access to water and sanitation services, thereby empowering communities to participate in their own development*

#### **Kerala Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency, Thiruvananthapuram (from [Vinod Kumar](#), Maithri, Palakkad)**

PTC Towers, SS Kovil Road, Thampanoor, Thiruvananthapuram; Tel: 91-471-2337002, 2337003, 2337005 ; Fax: 91-471-2337004 ; [mis@jalanidhi.com](mailto:mis@jalanidhi.com); <http://www.jalanidhi.com/index.htm>

*Works through Panchayats for implementation of its water supply schemes. 3699 water supply schemes managed by 3929 beneficiary groups have been completed so far*

#### **Water and Sanitation Management Organization, Gandhinagar (from [Avinash Zutshi](#), Feedback Ventures Pvt Ltd, Gurgaon)**

3rd Floor, Jalsewa Bhavan, Sector 10-A, Gandhinagar-382 010, Gujarat; Tel: 91-79-23247170, 23247171, 23237075 ; Fax: 91-79-23247485; [wasm@wasm.org](mailto:wasm@wasm.org);  
[http://www.wasm.org/cms.aspx?content\\_id=15](http://www.wasm.org/cms.aspx?content_id=15)

*Focuses on community-managed drinking water supply, with the involvement of Panchayats, coordinates the activities of the Village Water and Sanitation Committees*

**Uttarakhand Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project-Swajal Project Management Unit, Uttarakhand** (from [Neelima Garg](#), Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun)

Mussoorie Diversion Road, Makkawala, Dehradun; Tel: 91-135-2744022, 2733380; [pmu\\_uttaranchal@rediffmail.com](mailto:pmu_uttaranchal@rediffmail.com); <http://gov.ua.nic.in/swajal/programme.htm>

*Implements water and sanitation programmes in the state and facilitates with panchayats under TSC where water supply programmes are being implemented*

From [Arun Jindal](#), Society for Sustainable Development, Karauli

**Public Health and Engineering Department, Jaipur**

PHED, Jal Bhawan 2, Civil Lines, Jaipur 302006; Tel: 91-141-2222337, 2221837, 2222522, 2225461, 2222263, 22222657; Fax: 91-141-2222585; [raj\\_secy@nic.in](mailto:raj_secy@nic.in); <http://rajwater.gov.in/introduction.htm>

*Implements rural water and sanitation schemes in conjunction with Panchayats along with installation and maintenance of drinking water supply facilities*

**Swajaldhara, New Delhi**

9th Floor, Paryavarn Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003; Tel: 91-11-24361043; Fax: 91-11-24364113; [jstm@water.nic.in](mailto:jstm@water.nic.in); <http://ddws.nic.in/swajaldhara.htm>

*Programme focuses on decentralised implementation of rural drinking water supply, involving the participation of panchayats and communities*

From [Dipak Roy](#), UNICEF, New Delhi

**Aapni Yojana Sanitation Project, Rajasthan**

Rural Development and Watershed, Kfw Office, 21 Jor Bagh, New Delhi – 110003.; Tel: 91-11-2364-1202/7113; Fax: 91-11-2462-1203; [iihmrcpu@sancharnet.in](mailto:iihmrcpu@sancharnet.in); <http://cbhi-hsprod.nic.in/listdetails.asp?roid=87>

*Addresses the issue of scarcity of water, sanitation and hygiene through community participation, designed to cover 2.6 million people living in 1000 villages and 11 towns*

**Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau (KfW), New Delhi**

21 Jor Bagh, New Delhi-110003; Tel: 91-11-24641202/7113; Fax: 91-11-24641203 [kfw@kfwindia.com](mailto:kfw@kfwindia.com); <http://www.kfw.de/>

*Funded the first phase of the Aapni Yojana project in Rajasthan, aimed at providing rural water supply services through community participation*

**Jalswarajya Project, Mumbai** (from [Asad Umar](#), WaterAid(UK)-India Liaison Office West, Bhopal)

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Water Supply and Sanitation Department, Mantralaya, Nariman point, Mumbai - 400001; <http://www.mahawssd.gov.in/dataentry/home.asp>

*Community lead demand driven project of rural water supply and sanitation financially assisted by World Bank*

**Institute of Sustainable Development, Chennai** (from [Rema Saraswathy](#))

2/221 TSP Road, Veerapuram, Chennai-600055; Tel: 91-44-26840052; Fax: Fax No. [insudev@dataone.in](mailto:insudev@dataone.in); <http://www.isd.org.in/activities.htm>

*Aims to empower panchayats for efficient water governance involving the participation of communities and all stakeholders, including CBOs*

**Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, New Delhi** (from [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate)

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi 110011; <http://jnnurm.nic.in/>

*Focuses on bringing efficiency in service delivery mechanisms; including for water, sanitation, community participation, and accountability of ULBs/parastatal agencies.*

### ***Recommended Training Courses***

**Training on Drinking Water Quality Management, Development Alternatives, New Delhi** (from [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate)

6 December 2008 to 18 December 2008. Information available at <http://devalt.org/nomination/>.

For details contact Bhavana Gadre ; [bgadre@devalt.org](mailto:bgadre@devalt.org)

*The objective of the training is to help organizations understand the importance of drinking water quality monitoring in drinking water quality management.*

### ***Recommended Upcoming Events***

**Participatory Approach to Water Resource Management, New Delhi, 19-20 March 2009** (from [Tina Mathur](#), Research Associate)

Sponsored by Council for Social Development; Contact Firdaus Fatima Rizvi; Associate Fellow, Council for Social Development; [firdaus@csdindia.org](mailto:firdaus@csdindia.org) , [firdausrizvi@gmail.com](mailto:firdausrizvi@gmail.com)

*Aimed at discussing a participatory democratic and pro-people management approach to water management including local government institutions*

### ***Related Consolidated Replies***

**Improving water and sanitation governance by PRIs, from V. Kurien Baby, Socio-Economic Unit Foundation (SEUF), Kerala. Water Community and Decentralization Community**

Issued 8 September 2006. Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/cr-se-wes-decn-24080601.pdf> (PDF; Size: 157.83 KB)

*Experiences of Panchayat-based watsan schemes, factors preventing PRIs effective watsan governance, and identifies capacity-building topics for PRIs*

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## **Responses in Full**

**[Rajesh K. Sood](#), National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai**

I would like to share some feedback on the ground reality of decentralization to PRIs. Funds, functions and functionaries need to be devolved in order for them to perform well and ensure accountability. The decision of asking the panchayats to collect the water bills and keep half for maintenance did not work and had to be recalled. The reasons were that panchayats did not have any staff to do the maintenance work nor were the funds generated sufficient to even replace broken pipes.

Rather, decentralization needs to be in developing community based water quality monitoring mechanisms. A joint team of PRI functionaries and user groups from downstream, Irrigation & Public Health department (service provider) and health should periodically supervise and monitor the process of sedimentation, filtration and chlorination of the engineered water supply schemes. The department has its social responsibility and PRIs are not extension agency for government departments. They can facilitate and monitor. Social Audit needs to be developed for ensuring

good quality water and it is here that the role of PRIs is crucial as an institutional mechanism for accountability.

The access to water seems high as per the DDWS statistics. Rapid water testing kits need to be made available to panchayats as a tool for mobilization and capacity building for water quality is the need of the hour. Drinking water quality is a big issue with 90% of diseases attributed to unsafe water, and no mechanism for independent monitoring linked to action. IPH Department is responsible for supply of drinking water, but the purification process and supervision of this activity is rather lacking. The focus has been on quantity rather than quality. Some of the present initiatives on water quality include:

- IPH labs have been monitoring the water quality but the reliability of reports is questionable, with people complaining of dirty water, conflicting reports by independent researchers and water samples reported fit even during outbreaks of diarrhoeal disease.
- Under the Integrated Disease surveillance project of the health department, Drinking water quality monitoring has been initiated but is not yet linked to feedback and action.
- Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance capacity building has been initiated by the CCDU but has not yet taken off. The kits are not readily available.

Ensuring water quality is a full time activity and beyond the purview of any single service provider or stakeholder. An inter-sectoral framework needs to be developed to ensure independent monitoring mechanism with feedback lined to action and adequate resources. The department needs to be receptive to people's demand for quality of water and a joint monitoring mechanism to monitor the water purification process- storage, filtration and disinfection, and water quality. Long term solutions include improvements in sanitation and catchments area protection. Short term and immediate measures need to be taken to safeguard the health of the people. For ensuring safe and portable water supply, water should pass through three stages- Storage, Filtration and Disinfection. Storage removes 90-95% of the physical impurities by mechanism of suspension. It also allows penetration of light which results in oxidation of organic matter by aerobic bacteria, thus decreasing free ammonia content of water. It also decreases total bacterial count by as much as 90 percent. Filtration is second stage of water purification which results in 98-99% drop in bacterial count apart from other impurities. Disinfection is final stage of purification which results in destroying all pathogenic organisms left after storage and filtration. All these stages are required in series for purification of water. Even if one stage is by-passed, the water may not be rendered fit for drinking purposes.

Before handing over responsibility to PRIs, there is a need for capacity building of PRI members on the water purification process and how to monitor the process and outputs. Monitoring of the regular maintenance/ backwashing of sand filters is also essential. Role of civil society organizations backed up by an independent watchdog agency (external quality control) is critical. Jan Sunvai and community audit needs to be built in as a critical feedback input.

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**[Kalyan Paul](#), Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation, Ranikhet**

Grassroots has been involved with assisting rural communities in over 300 villages to plan, implement, operate and maintain community managed drinking water systems. While most of these villages are in Uttarakhand, we have some limited experience in Himachal Pradesh too. Basically, it is essential to understand and appreciate that the Choice of technology matters a lot in terms of sustainability of drinking water systems, both from the technical angle as well as from the management point of view.

We could share a recently produced DVD which documents this work and the specific role of Infiltration Wells as an Appropriate Technology in the hill states of India. At the same time, we would like to invite Puneet and his colleagues to visit us and discuss the potential benefits of

such systems directly with communities who have been able to operate systems for over 5-10 years, that too at a marginal profit!

Look forward to more feedback and discussion on community managed drinking water systems and the related topic of catchment area treatment for sustainability of such systems.

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**Ramakrishna Nallathiga, Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad**

Under the World Bank Funded AP Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project, it is envisaged in that the water supply assets would be generated in various villages and operation and maintenance of assets (hand pumps and public water supply schemes) is transferred to Gram Panchayats together with budget. The State Government Department of Rural Water Supply is taking care of O&M of comprehensive public water supply schemes. The details are on the website: <http://aprwww.gov.in/html/aprwwwsp-ap.htm>.

Social Audit has been successfully deployed in various facets of development projects/schemes implementation in AP e.g., NREGS, PDS. Community score card methodology has been used under the AP Rural Poverty Project to monitor the implementation of rural health programmes. The detailed operating manual is available at : <http://www.sasanet.org/documents/Case%20Studies/Andhra%20Pradesh%20Community%20Scorecards%20Operational%20Manual.pdf>

A similar operating manual for water supply and sanitation department of Maharashtra was developed and available for ready reference at: <http://www.sasanet.org/documents/Case%20Studies/Accountability%20in%20Maharashtra%20RWSS.pdf>

There is also a World Bank study identifying the current lacunae in water supply system and setting a reform agenda that identified a reformed framework of institutional arrangements for rural water supply delivery and maintenance. The report is available online at: [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/main?menuPK=64187510&pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000009265\\_3980901105844](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/main?menuPK=64187510&pagePK=64193027&piPK=64187937&theSitePK=523679&entityID=000009265_3980901105844).

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**Vinod Kumar, Maithri, Palakkad**

In Kerala one of the thrust areas of PRI s since 1996 was rural water supply and sanitation. Both LSG and WR departments had taken a slew of measures to operationalise the system. Later the WB funded KRWSA successfully institutionalized this in more than 10% of PRI s. RNE funded Jeevadahara also tried out this model successfully. Both the programmes developed and utilized social audit mechanisms. Under the Decentralization Support Programme a detailed activity mapping is done in the related sectors. Now a study is undergoing to fine tune the existing mechanisms with the support of WB. Details are available on the related websites.

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**Jyotsna Bapat, Consultant, New Delhi**

One important lesson for service delivery in infrastructure in general and in water supply in particular is the need to have a separate agency responsible for service delivery and for monitoring it. This arms distance between service delivery on a daily basis and ensuring accountability to consumers sustainably, is important for ensuring water to all and especially to marginal groups that need to be serviced. The past experience where the local Panchayat is also the provider and regulatory of water supply is fraught with crossing cutting interests especially where there is a monthly fee charged for water delivery.

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**Amit Kumar Singh, Water Testing Lab, Karnal**

In Haryana, the experience of handing over the water supply systems is not very good. Water supply remains failed for a long time due to non payment of electricity bills. People are not ready to pay the water revenue. Leakages in the water supply lines are not repaired due to which water borne diseases are spreading. Water is not been disinfected before supplying to consumers. Water quality monitoring is not done by panchayats. Now the State government is planning to take over the charge of water supply.

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**Avinash Zutshi, Feedback Ventures Pvt Ltd, Gurgaon**

One can look into RNE model Alleppy, Mallapuram in Kerala, WASMO in Gujarat, VISHWAS in AP and Dutch work in UP. The models are many, and I understand WASMO has been replicated at state level and most likely may be accepted nationally.

The fundamental principle has been to adopt and work with provisions CAA 73rd and 74th in letter and spirit, for sustainable, well governed and fully participative ways of doing things, moving away from conventions and delivering services differently.

However my sincere suggestion will be to:

Guide development planning akin to climatic/cultural/social/economical and geo-morphological contexts)-focus improved access to core public/ basic services for inclusive and sustainable growth;

Guide processes for mainstreaming gender/ poverty alleviation;

Focus in particular, the interface with river basin/ local water resources management, and water-related environmental preservation development planning;

Guide traditional leadership systems into rights protection and integrated Safe Hygiene and changed behavioral practices;

Coordinate and direct activities in the areas of advocacy, research and policy development;

And, if the above perspective is kept upfront while planning, try and do something which has local relevance, has been proven suitable locally and blends with local economical and technological requirements. Attempt to work towards a Change. The change which leads to institutional reforms may be some degree of acceptable restructuring of the delivery and policy planning set-up/s (State/ National level).

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**Neelima Garg, Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan, Dehradun**

The Uttarakhand Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (Sector Program) is a World Bank funded Sector Program based on the principles of Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). The main objective of the project is to scale up the reforms in the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector. This is a pioneer project of India in which SWAp principle is adopted. The PMU is expected to function as a resource organization for bringing about the sectoral reforms in the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector; coordination and management of training programmes for personnel of village water and sanitation committees, village facilitators, support organizations and village communities including members of Gram Panchayat and Jal Prabhandan Samitis and primary school teachers.

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**Arun Jindal, Society for Sustainable Development, Karauli**

With regard to our experiences on your query on experiences of decentralized rural water supply service delivery by panchayats, in Rajasthan, Panchayats are in the forefront of planning but

implementation is in the hands of the Public Health and Engineering department (PHED). Hand pump repair staff work under the Panchayat Samiti, but the PHED supervises and takes work from them. New hand pump/tube well installation and maintenance is PHED responsibility but operation comes under Panchayat, because Government does not give funds to Panchayats for operation. Panchayats have to collect money from the villagers. One central sector scheme- Swajaldhara- is implemented by Panchayats through village water and sanitation committee, but under the supervision of PHED technical staff. No scheme has been completed since last 6 years in Karauli District.

Service delivery by Panchayats is the issue on which many organizations working. We have to understand what our goal is for empowerment of Panchayats and urban local bodies. Presently Panchayats and municipalities are working more as contractors. Their capacities are almost negligible for planning or implementing according to the needs or desires of their constituencies. Capacity development of elected representatives of local self government is a need. In fact beurocracy or legislative/parliament representatives are interested in using panchayat representatives for vote collection.

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**Dipak Roy, UNICEF, New Delhi**

Rajasthan also gives us one of the best practices in community-managed (which is not entirely congruent with Panchayat-managed, of course) water supply projects in the country- the Aapni Yojana.

The Aapni Yojana provides about 370 villages spread over three districts with 24/7 piped water supply. The delivery of treated water till the village boundaries is the responsibility of the Project, while from then onwards the cost of distribution, collection of tariff and maintenance is the responsibility of the Pani Panchayats. The cost recovery used to be in the order of 28% till last year. The project was financed by the German Development Bank- the KFW and has been concluded after 10 years in 2005, although the Pani Panchayats are now working to achieve total Sanitation in the Panchayats (NGP). They had won 7 NGPs in 2006-07 and 32 NGPs in 2008.

There is extensive documentation of the project activities, and especially of the community participation component. I am forwarding this response also to Mr. Gautam Sadhu, who has been building and continues to manage the community management system in Aapni Yojana.

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**K.K Krishnakumar, Centre for Socio-economic and Environmental Studies(CSES), Kochi**

In Kerala, there is a widely acclaimed model of decentralized water supply- Olavanna model. Kindly visit the following links for more details.

<http://www.tni.org/books/waterindia.pdf>

<http://www.hindu.com/2005/03/23/stories/2005032307290300.htm>

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**Romit Sen, WaterAid, New Delhi**

This is with regard to the question on examples of using "social audit process" for rural water supply schemes.

The Citizen's Action programme of Water Aid aims at engaging citizens in a dialogue process to negotiate with service providers for demanding better services for water and sanitation services

and holding them accountable. This approach is based on the realisation that there is a gap between physical coverage and actual service. To ensure sustainability it becomes imperative to bridge the above gap and enable communities involve in a participatory and transparent engagement with the service provider and governments. It is also the right of the people to know about various implementation schemes and utilisation of money being spent by the government. This programme is operational in Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh and Godda district of Jharkhand.

Social audit process has been used as a tool to seek the implementation of schemes with regard to water and sanitation and subsequent maintenance in their respective areas. The methodology adopted in the process is as follows –

- Continuous coordination and repetitive visits to district, block and panchayat, for gathering the information
- Primary data collected from district and block is compiled and analyzed
- Meeting held with district and block level officials ,sharing information and planning with them , discussing about the need and significance of social audit process in NREGA and water and sanitation scheme
- FGD conducted in each hamlet of Gram Panchayat and secondary level information were collected, compiled and analyzed
- All the information of muster-roll was consolidated in excise sheet containing the total days and payment of labourers of particular work
- Muster-rolls were checked, physical verification made and gaps/discrepancies identified and listed
- Job- cards of labourers were scrutinized ,matched with muster-roll and gaps were identified
- Information gathered on drinking water a sanitation scheme has been compiled and analyzed

Through a series of interface meetings between the villagers, officials from various line departments and block/ district level officials the communities have presented their findings and have sought ameliorative action for their problems.

This approach has resulted in better implementation of the programmes in these areas and the data generated by the communities in some cases is being used by the local administration to get an assessment of various programmes.

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**[Asad Umar](#), WaterAid(UK)-India Liaison Office West, Bhopal**

I would like to share some of the experiences on water service delivery by panchayats in Maharashtra. Hope it would be useful.

**The Reform Initiatives in Water supply and sanitation sector in Maharashtra**

The Jalswarajya project, based on the reform principles of water supply and sanitation is another successful example of decentralized service delivery mechanism in the state of Maharashtra. The reform process aimed to scale up community-led water supply programme and included the following elements:

- A demand driven approach to ensure local participation in planning and management with village level capacity building;
- A shift in Government's role from provider to facilitator;
- Streamlining agency functions for integrated service delivery;
- Partial capital cost sharing and full operations and maintenance (O&M) cost sharing by users
- Conservation measures of rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge.
- Capacity building of local institutions for planning and management of the schemes

Currently 120-150 GPs of all the districts are being covered under the new reform initiatives with the main objectives to

- Increase rural households' access to improved and sustainable drinking water supply and sanitation services;
- Institutionalize decentralization of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) service delivery to rural local governments and communities.

#### **Salient features of the Programme**

- At district level the project is being operationalised by Zillah Parishad which is mainly responsible for facilitating various processes of fund disbursement to the GPs, Extending capacity building, and IEC support through support organizations, conducting the project appraisal and monitoring the progress of the projects as well as providing technical support to the GPs through a panel of technical service provider. At village level the project is being operationalised by Gram Panchayat with the help of three sub committees. VWSC a sub committee of Gram Panchayat is responsible for participatory planning, implementation and operation and maintenance of created water supply and sanitation facilities where as Social Audit Committee, another subcommittee is responsible for monitoring of the Project at planning and implementation stage to ensure better quality of work, financial transparency and equitable benefit of the programme, where as a women development committee ensures the gender mainstreaming under the project. The project related decision making is the prerogative of Gram Sabha.
- Under the programme the integrated approach of water supply, sanitation and hygiene has helped community level sensitization towards importance of better hygienic practices for getting safe drinking water supply. Moreover the successful community mobilization efforts have resulted in elimination of open defecation and large number of village have already got Nirmal Gram Puraskar
- The capacity building initiatives at village level has led to better accounting and record keeping system as well as proper operation and maintenance of the created facilities. The participatory planning processes have given the choice to community to select affordable and manageable water supply options. Special emphasis for source augmentation has helped to improve the sustainability of created drinking water sources

The reform initiatives undertaken by Govt.of Maharashtra is one of the successful example where three tier of Panchayati raj Institutions are actively involved to operationalize decentralized water supply and sanitation projects

Due to this reform initiative a substantial number of villages have emerged as successful community based models for participatory planning and decentralized service delivery of water supply and sanitation.

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#### **Rema Saraswathy, Institute of Sustainable Development, Chennai**

The Institute of Sustainable Development has been working on a project- Community Organisation for Water Governance (COWaG) - on an action research mode in ten selected Village *Panchayats*(VPs) in Thiruvallur district in Tamil Nadu. The COWaG aims to empower the PRIs, and CBOs for efficient water governance with the participation of all the stakeholders. These VPs were put through all the four key processes of COWaG. Details of the processes are available at our website <http://www.isd.org.in/activities.htm> and more details are available on request. Some of the observations from our bench mark with regard to water supply at these selected VPs and the water governance practice are, in majority of the VPs:

- The general attitude of the VPP is just to continue what has been doing additional interest has been shown if an extension of pipe line, erecting an IPP or any such extra physical work involved to make the coverage complete
- No interest is shown in making any change in the operation and maintenance of the water supply/delivery system as such
- The pump operators, the key players in the village level water supply/delivery system, still hold the power as its 'managers' and continue to do so through generations at many places without adequate technical knowledge, and are susceptible to corruption
- Community wants uninterrupted service but likes never to be asked about the charges for the service, ready to bribe to maintain the same status-quo

The COWaG pilot project has given a different experience for the PRIs, CBO representatives, PRI functionaries and the community at large. Their involvement in the project had a bearing on the criteria of selection of the VPs to the project. The selection was carried out in two different ways. Eight conveniently selected and two self selected VPs comprised the ten VPs. The self selected VPs had VPPs with various plans for development of the VP and that was their priority too. A general tendency was there not to hurt the vote banks even if significant development did not take place. The noteworthy point is that the two self selected VPs emerged from about 50 and odd panchayats with whom the concept of COWaG was shared. Of all these ten VPs, nine did not experience any water shortage and for one among the convenient sample certain habitations were facing lack of water. After a considerable period in the COWaG processes, seven of the ten VPs, have taken positive steps, with varying degrees. Commendable changes observed in three VPs and the three included one with partial water scarcity and the two self selected VPs. The lessons we learnt are: there should be a crying need, or there should be a leader with a vision. Another way would be to initiate some effort at larger scale, say State level, and awarding/rewarding the VPs to recognize their efforts. Like in the case of sanitation, Nirmal Gram Puraskar is an incentive for the VPPs. This encourages them to discuss about the toilets with their community. Whether and how long they remain *nirmal* after receiving the *puraskar* remains a question. Yet, this is a good motivation for the VPPs to take some efforts.

The efforts like that of the Change Management Group of Engineers from Tamilnadu Government (<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2008/11/02/stories/2008110250010100.htm> and <http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2008/10/26/stories/2008102650130400.htm>) can bring in a considerable change in the *Panchayat* level water supply system. If the efforts of the CMG kind of Engineers are supplemented by COWaG kind of community mobilization, the changes will become faster and more sustainable.

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#### **Nabaneeta Rudra, Mott MacDonald Pvt. Ltd., Noida**

While working for selecting GP for Nirmal Gram Puruskar in West Bengal (Burdwan district) I have seen the community managing some of the deep bore wells especially during summer. This is not under any scheme but is being used and paid by the community itself. So the community manages these bore wells and distributes water to one who pays for the well.

I had a similar experience during my visit to Ethiopia, Africa for a study. Our study area is a village named Bordede, located in Oromia Region West Harage Zone, 255Km from Addis Ababa on the way to Harar along the Asphalted high way. The village is found governed by village administration and government/ruling parties has appointed town administration officers, grass root level political office similar to Indian Gram panchayat. The town administration is responsible for the overall development of the village and for collection of land and other taxes but water is not managed by them. In fact availability of water is a major problem in the village, there is a water facility (bore pump) managed by the community. So whoever needs water pays for it. The poor villagers are paying about 8 birr (about Rs.16.50) for 1000 litre of water.

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**[Amitabh Mukhopadhyay](#), Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi**

What Romit has written about is wonderful. Having been associated with social audit activities of MKSS since 1996, I feel what he has taken on is extremely important. Could Romit give an elaborate narrative of just one case of social audit activities taken up by you and detail the findings presented at the JAN Sunvai? That would be of immense use to participants here.

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**[Arunabha Majumder](#), Jadavpur University, Kolkata**

Where Panchayati Raj system is functioning through elected representatives in three tiers, the decentralisation of rural water supply programme is progressing well. The PRI must be strong and competent to deliver the services to the villagers. Members and functionaries of the PRI must be trained, so that they can function through decentralisation process. Presently, it is a transition stage. Some states (West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura etc) are doing well. In some states, it is yet to start.

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**[Dinesh Kumar](#), Institute for Resource Analysis and Policy, Hyderabad**

Going through several of the email responses, over the past few days, to the query posted by Mr. Puneet Srivastava, GTZ, it seems the term "social audit" is "misunderstood" or "misconstrued". Most people seem to assume that this is community auditing or auditing by local community. At least, some of the more conventional literature by Public Auditors seems to suggest something different. Basically, it is a level next to "value for money auditing" and "performance auditing". We may regard the first two audit functions as representing "economy", and "efficiency". The social audit function is an "effectiveness audit".

As far as State Audit is concerned, in value for money audit and performance audit, it examines areas internal to government agencies. In social audit, it goes beyond these areas and examines the impact of specific governmental activities on certain sections of the society which are in contact with the government agencies" (Source: Social Auditing and its relevance to Audit of Public Utilities, M. Parthasarathy, Former Additional Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General, India).

Who does is one question, and what is to be done is another. What makes social audit different from other forms of auditing is "what is to be looked for in the process of auditing of public utilities like WSS" changes, rather than the "person who does it".

Please correct me if I missed the point. Needless to say, I am not a specialist on this subject, and just trying to learn this particular area in water and sanitation theme.

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**[Manish Kumar](#), Nationalist Kisan Congress, Uttar Pradesh\***

I have encountered with a peculiar situation in Mathura, U.P. where the ground water is brackish and not fit for irrigation. One very progressive farmer took an initiative in constructing a recharge well in the village. He knocked all the possible doors for financial assistance but could not get any support except the promises and hassles in getting the clearance from the irrigation department. Ultimately, he mortgaged his field and took the individual loan from the bank. The cost of construction of the recharge well was around seven lacs. Now after crossing over all the hurdles he is maintaining that loan recharge well of the area as well as the quality of the underground water and supplying sweet water through plastic pipeline in an area of about one square kilometer. He is charging very a minimal price of Rs. Twenty for an hour for fresh water supply to

the beneficiaries which he usually gets without delay. Now he has repaid his old loan. We along with him are again planning to construct one more well in the surrounding area as a part of a big livelihoods promotion scheme. All the district officials along with top officials from the capital including panchayat raj officers often visit this village to see the project and appreciate the innovation of an uneducated farmer but we have not been provided any support for the project. Therefore, instead of only going through the establishment, we must also encourage the individual honest efforts.

\* *Offline contribution*

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***Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!***

*If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Decentralization Community in India at [se-decn@solutionexchange-un.net.in](mailto:se-decn@solutionexchange-un.net.in) and/or [se-wes@solutionexchnage-un.net.in](mailto:se-wes@solutionexchnage-un.net.in) with the subject heading "Re: [se-decn][se-watr] Query: Water Service Delivery by Panchayats- Experiences. Additional Reply."*

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