

Users becoming managers of water supply in Kutch district

Gujarat

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY

Community Water *plus*

Three interesting features of this case

- Kutch is a challenging semi-arid area with source sustainability issues.
- WASMO has an even balance of technical and software staff with dedicated units for social mobilisation, IEC, evaluation, training and management support
- One of the key features of WASMO is the establishment of 'Pani Samitis.

Key data on the Gujarat context

All India data for reference in parenthesis

Water supply coverage: 97% (96%)

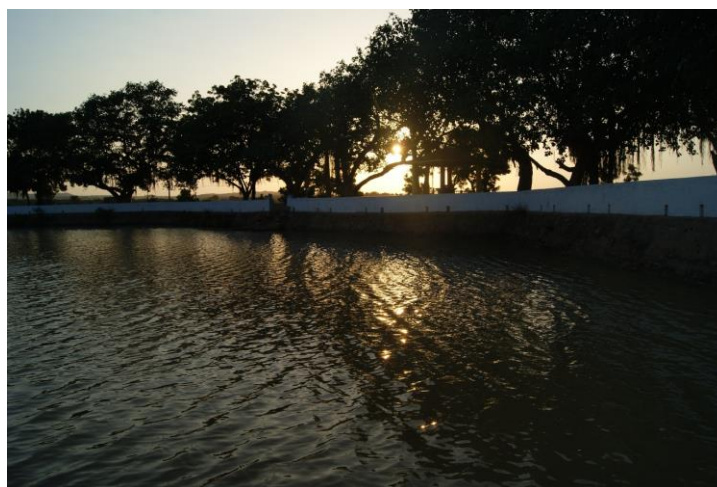
GDP per capita: \$6,094 (\$4,243)

HDI: 0.527 (0.467)

Devolution Index rank: 10 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 is a case study on the Water and Sanitation Management Organization (WASMO), the entity dedicated to rural water supply in Gujarat, illustrated by its experiences in Kutch district.

Kutch is a semi-arid district in Gujarat, known for its water scarcity, erratic and variable rainfall. These conditions made it imperative to adopt a decentralised, community-owned and demand-driven approach for the sustainability of the water and sanitation systems. WASMO is a special purpose vehicle established to develop community-managed rural drinking water supply throughout the State of Gujarat. It takes up the responsibility of empowering communities to manage local water sources and village drinking water supply services by adopting the role and strategy of a facilitator rather than a provider, which is in line with State Government's principle of subsidiarity and decentralised governance. It creates Pani Samitis (formal Water Committees), supports in creating and implementing village action plans and trains the Pani Samitis in taking charge of water service delivery and its operation and maintenance (O&M). This case investigates the extent and type of support provided by WASMO.



The enabling support environment

The support institutions include those at state level and district level.

- At the state level two institutions are providing hardware support. Gujarat Water Supply and Sewerage Board (GWSSB) identifies finances and develops water resources in village where there is no water source available and ensures potable quality and water supply. Gujarat Water Infrastructure Limited supplies water from inter-district Narmada Canal Water in bulk.
- WASMO is responsible for hardware implementation within the village by developing the distribution system of village water schemes. In addition it provides software support in three cycles. The first cycle is characterised by numerous field visits by technical and social personnel, formation of Pani Samitis and preparation of village action plans. The second cycle focuses on the execution of village action plans. Third cycle is more of handholding support involving training and capacity building of committee members, exposure visits, continuous monitoring and auditing. Training is provided in collecting tariff for annual O&M, water testing and sensitizing members on various operational manual and guidelines.
- The District Water and Sanitation Unit (DWSU) implements the water programme. DWSU works with a District Water and Sanitation Committee (DWSC), chaired by the District Collector who approves the village action plan.

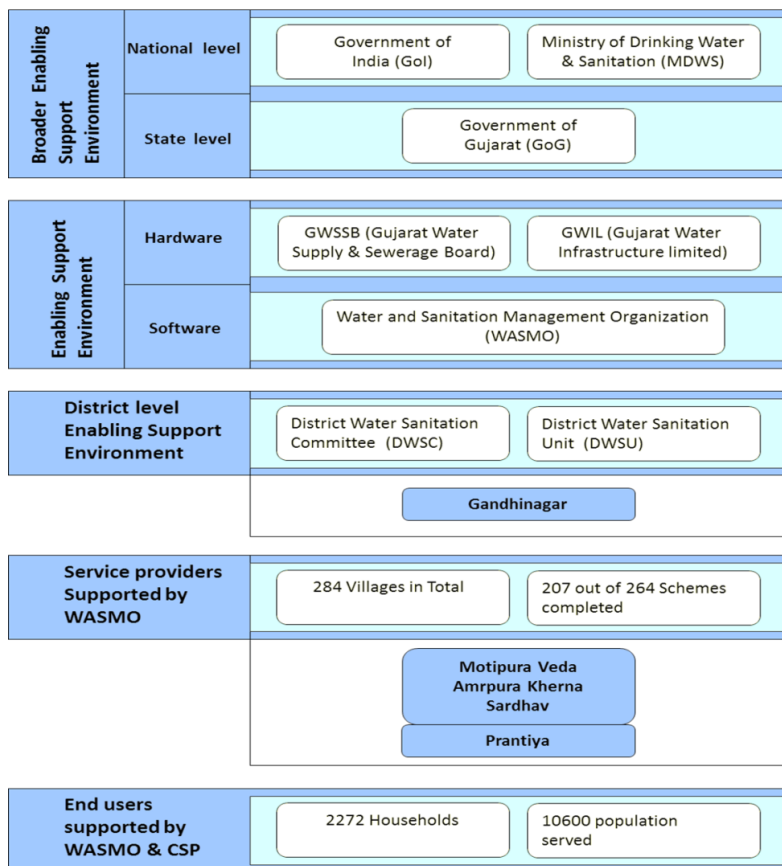


Figure 1: Institutional set-up for service delivery in Gandhinagar district, Gujarat

Community service provider

The Pani Samiti is a democratically elected body and a standing sub-committee the under Gram Panchayat. It has 10-12 members with the Sarpanch or Deputy Sarpanch as the Chairperson and Talati as Secretary.

The Samiti is responsible to plan, design and implement village water supply schemes and take over responsibility of its O&M, fix and arrange collection of water tariff for sustenance of system and services. It opens and maintains a separate bank account for funds flow takes decision that non-payment of water tariff will lead to cutting off of household connection. The Pani Samiti makes optimal use of the existing GP resources (clerks and talati). It carries out water testing twice a month with help of kits provided by WASMO.

WASMO has stressed the importance of women in water management and made it mandatory to have at least 33% of women in the Samiti. In one village, Samiti consists of all-women brigade with uniform saris.

Service received by households

Water supply is provided through a combination of piped water supply and local water sources. There is specific focus on water conservation and groundwater recharge, by restoration of village ponds and building bunds on Kankavati.

Village infrastructure is in good physical condition, with 100% coverage through household connections. Service levels are generally high with several villages having 24x7 supply. This compares particularly high to control villages that are close by but not served by WASMO (see right-hand lower corner in the figure below).

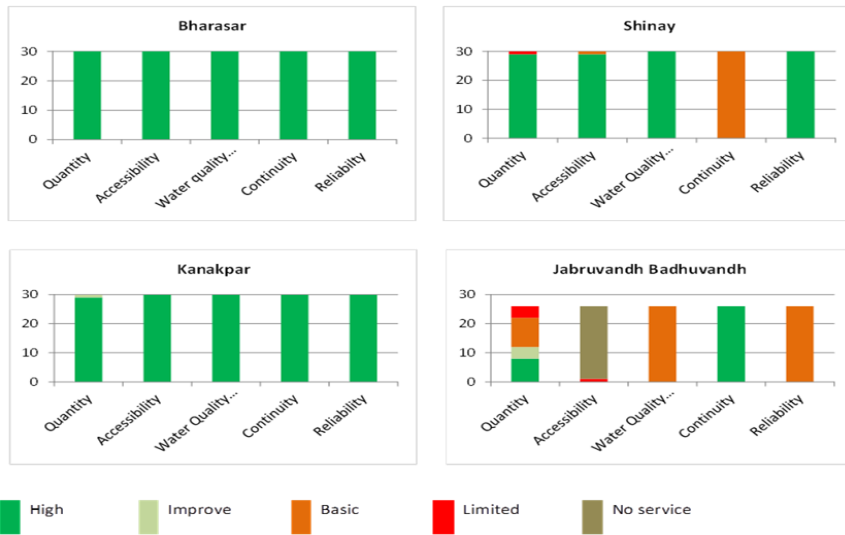


Figure 2: Service levels in villages supported by WASMO and others (right-hand lower corner)

The costs

The capital costs are mainly coming from WASMO and from national government funds. Communities contribute almost 10% to the capital costs. Recurrent costs are shared. User contributions are supposed to be for minor operation and maintenance costs. Local government (panchayats) provide contributions to the operational costs, for example by assigning a clerk to the pani samiti. They also cover some of the capital maintenance works. WASMO provides ongoing monitoring and technical support and contributes to capital maintenance.

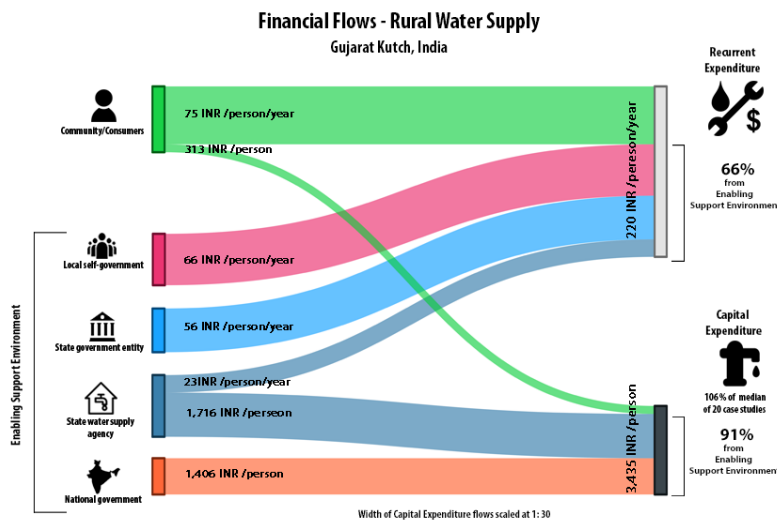


Figure 3: Costs and financial flow for capital and recurrent costs

Conclusion

WASMO, is a professional support organisation, providing comprehensive support in a demand-responsive manner. It focuses on community involvement across the project cycles, though it is limited during the service delivery phase, as pani samitis have large autonomy, but remains accessible on request.

The model can be classified as community managed model with direct support from WASMO, and administratively and financially supported by the Gram Panchayat. Professionalization at community level is low, as the model is based on volunteerism, and only few staff (borehole operator) is hired. In spite of that, the pani samitis perform well in information sharing and accountability, record keeping and tariff collection and basic O&M.

Through this model, 100% coverage with household connections is achieved, with high levels of service. Still continuity and reliability could be improved. And some of the assets are reaching the end of their life-span.

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. The summary has been 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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