

Democratisation of Water Management

Nurturing Democratic Change

"A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history."
- Mahatma Gandhi

**Change Management Group
TWAD Board, Tamil Nadu. India
2003- 2006**

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The Tamil Nadu Experiment 2003-2006

“What does it matter if people look upon us as dreamers”
.... Mahatama Gandhi

Preface

This report is a record of an ongoing experience of a government organisation, the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD), which initiated a process of critically reviewing its practices and values, its work culture and performance, its vision and achievements. Arising from this churning began the process of organization transformation in light of the new vision identified for it. In a sense this report will never be complete, as it is the saga of a history which is continually being engaged with and consequently, constantly undergoing changes. But to the extent that the report is a testimony of experiences, it presents an opportunity to share with others, the possibilities, joys and difficulties of initiating a change process to improve the delivery systems of critical services like water. The intention of documenting the experiences is also to share and invite the concerned to become a ‘co-traveller’ with the participants of the change experiment, with the hope that learnings of this experiment will provide a model for an alternative governance paradigm.

Why change?

There are not too many similar experiences of a huge government institution, which has voluntarily launched a process of critically reviewing and transforming itself. It is never an easy process. There are enough reasons why a ‘change’ initiative is always ill advised or untimely or an unnecessary risk. But, as the unfolding experiment in TWAD shows, the time has arrived when public systems have to start learning to manage change. The choice is no longer whether to, rather the issue is of when an organisation is going to initiate change process internally, in its functioning and work processes and externally in its relations with different stake holders and others and most importantly, in terms of the quality of services delivered.

It is in this backdrop that this report gains relevance. We hope that the report will present a ringside view of a process in which hundreds of people inside the TWAD Board are involved in, and help the reader to walk through the journey of the last two years over 2003-05.

We trust that you will appreciate the spirit with which this report is written. As many of the pioneers of the transformation process would say, “We want your informed and process-critical response” to help establish a new model for the future of India.

2. Why this transformation exercise? The Context ...

There are two situational factors, which propelled the organisation to search for a creative solution to address vital issues of organisational relevance and change:

- the growing water crisis and
- the identity issue within the water sector.

Both these issues presented the concrete context, which together compelled and accelerated the attempt to find an integrated solution to manage the water crisis while dealing with internal issues of performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the water delivery system.

Growing Water crisis

Following several years of failed monsoons the state had to deal with the crippling effect of continuing drought. This drought and attendant water scarcity situation was accentuated by over exploitation of ground water, poor expansion of water recharge structures and neglect of traditional water sources including wells, ponds and springs. Greater urbanization of peri-urban areas was placing tremendous demands on water supply.

There was growing realisation that the 1980's strategy of addressing water problem as merely an issue of water supply was a limited one and that a new perspective had to be adopted including addressing water consumption habits of people at large with emphasis on water conservation.

It was also becoming increasingly clear that mere financial and technological interventions had limitations and by themselves were not producing improvements beyond a point. The issue had to be looked at from a fresh angle: viz., ***the challenge of bringing about***

***attitudinal transformation,
perspective change and
institutional reorientation.***

The Identity Issue: Changed Working Context

The crippling water scarcity was also raising issues of ‘what went wrong’ in the public fora. Civil Society started looking at the water sector and role of organisations working in it, with a critical eye.

A focus group set up within the organization examined various alternatives to approach the above problem, ranging from stricter monitoring, and increasing investments

to Changing Mindsets. Through November 2003 to February 2004 TWAD tried doing more of the same, viz. well drafted guidelines, reviews, decision to focus on recharge, but still the spark was missing.

Initial Training Interventions: The Context of the 2003 Exercises

In early 2003-2004 a series of meetings, focused group discussions and 3-day workshops were held covering all engineers attached to the RWS Sector. Thus while there was widespread dissemination about the new paradigm and changed expectations from TWAD Board engineers the extent of assimilation was not clear. The response of most participants was of tacit acceptance of the new community orientation thrust, as that was now the stated policy of the government. Beyond that, there was little or no feedback or engagement reflecting true internalisation.

It became increasingly apparent that the rhetoric of community approaches to water supply incorporated in the Tenth Plan Policy Framework would remain only words on paper unless there was discussion within the organisation about changed roles and expectations of engineers, about the type of responsibilities that they would have to shoulder, new skills that would be required to be learnt and so on. Most critically, what had to be urgently addressed was the issue of attitudinal changes amongst engineers who were now being asked to play new roles of becoming 'social engineers' requiring them to perform engineering functions within a social matrix, in which they were required not only to deal with scientific facts and technology issues but also required to be sensitive to social dynamics.

The difficulty was that there was no forum or established process within the organisation's functioning, which could facilitate a process of open and critical exploration. Hierarchy bound and status conscious practices also inhibited open exchange amongst even those few who perceived the nature of challenge and crisis before them. It was in such a context, that the present transformation intervention process was initiated and a pair of external consultants¹ invited to help plan, implement and partner major change exercises throughout the organisation.

¹ Dr. V. Suresh and Pradip Prabhu of *Organisational Development & Excellence Consultants (P) Ltd.*, Chennai, India. Both the consultants are trained in management sciences and have been active in change management and institutional transformation exercises in large service delivery departments of Governments like Social Welfare, School Education, Health and Water departments. They were also involved as part of a larger team in a major exercise on good governance in the north eastern state of Nagaland in India. Both of them are rights activists holding prominent positions in the human rights and tribal rights movement in India. The exercises at institutional transformation of government departments have been enriched by an integration of grass roots mobilizing experience and perspectives with organizational development and change management techniques and skills.

3. The Building blocks of the transformation process

(i) Shifts in mind sets

The TWAD Board enjoys an exclusive mandate for providing water supply in Tamil Nadu. So far the Water Board executives functioned as exclusive specialists answerable only as providers. The challenges of the water crisis however have dramatically altered their situation and context. Their traditional top down approach to water has failed and the stakeholders including civil society expect change. The engineers now have to renegotiate their relationships with a whole new plethora of interest groups and stakeholders. Detailed internal deliberations led to identification of a need for community based approach to ensure sustainable water systems. Thus from being sole decision makers, the Water Managers have to now function as a body whose future is intrinsically linked with community choice.

All this calls for a major re-examination of the nature of relations between the Board and the larger public, by individuals in the Board at their **personal level** and the Board as an **institutional entity**. The exploration will naturally have to cover the issues of social, cultural and economic relations and forces.

Strategically, this process required that a conscious intervention focus on

i) Attitudinal changes amongst individuals – Covering the manner in which individuals perceive their own roles and functions and nature of relationship between themselves, the Water Board and the community at large.

ii) Attitudinal changes within the organisation – Encompassing the manner in which the organisation relates to the ordinary citizen who is now being addressed as a ‘consumer’ of the services offered by the Board, with the aim of reaching the unreached.

iii) Attitudinal Changes amongst key stake holders – The larger change effort will also have to include a concurrent change in the way other stake holders and the community at large also perceives the relevance and importance of the Board and the services it offers. This is premised on the fact that where people see possibilities of meaningful and purposive interaction with the service provider they will naturally engage in a sustained relationship for mutual benefit, leading to sustainable and equitable services.

(ii) The thrust of institutional change

The TWAD Board is a repository of the accumulated wisdom, knowledge and experiences of hundreds of highly qualified engineers and a vast treasure house of information about the water sector in Tamil Nadu. It is thus strategic to utilize the technocratic and managerial expertise of the Board as the starting point to transform the organisation into a more ***people focused, community responsive and publicly accountable organisation***.

We may highlight the challenges before the Board as one of transforming the organisation into one

OF BEING

Responsive in RELATIONS and *Responsible* in PRACTICE
Transparent in CHARACTER and *Participative* in ACTION
Accountable in ATTITUDES and *Articulate* in EXPRESSION

The dynamics of such a change process will typically cover the following dimensions:

- (1) **Ensuring `Convergent Community Action` by bringing together state service providers and officials with an active, involved and better informed community.**
- (2) **Establishing meaningful interface between community and service delivery systems**
- (3) **Ensure convergence and coherence in policy formulation, planning and implementation.**
- (4) **Strengthening service delivery systems** by focusing on improving efficiency and effectiveness of individuals and systems and self-sustaining change efforts.
- (5) **Capacity building of different stake holders including government officials, women and local communities, local bodies and NGO representatives and elected representatives.**

(iii) Some basic assumptions

The training effort is *premised* on the following important assumptions:

- **Individuals should be willing and be committed to exploring the need for change in themselves and in the department.**
- **The senior officials in the department should openly exhibit their own willingness and readiness to work for bringing about change and be ready to lead by personal example.**
- **Sustaining Individual level changes by Supportive Responses of Institution.** Individual level changes will be sustained and successful only when the system also demonstrates its readiness to stand by individuals during the process of bringing about a more efficient, responsive and human concern based system.
- Just as individual behavior reflects one's own sense of values, attitudes, norms, vision, culture and worldviews, systems too reflect similar characteristics.
- **Thus, all change projects can succeed only when they address the imperatives of change at both the individual level and the system level in the entirety of issues listed above.**

4. *The Training Design: Three Core Thrust Areas*

There were essentially three thrust areas covering the training design:

1. **Breaking Barriers – Building Bridges**

Addressing issues of the `person` and the `personal`, exploring the ways in which people relate to one another and creating a climate of camaraderie based on shared experiences and group learning.

2. **Confronting Challenges – Creating Convergences**

Exploring issues of collective living and survival as members of different stakeholders and from the prism of different stakeholders to examine the issues of water management in rural areas based on an assessment of each other's priorities and conflicts.

3. **Synergising Strengths – Strategising Success**

Examining the strengths of different stake holders critical to the success of any venture like the TNRWSSP, to bring about synergy in the use of energies and resources and evolving strategies to ensure success of such schemes in a practical manner in the actual field context.

The Basic Construct:

The difficulties of working in a hierarchical, government system made it necessary to address some critical issues at the very beginning of the process...

To break hierarchical modes of relating and encourage free interaction

To ensure people do not take recourse to strategic `silence` in presence of seniors

To prevent people saying `Yes` when they actually meant NO!

To instill a sense of individual and collective ownership of the process of change.

The Koodam:

The transformation process was begun with an invitation to the members of the Board participating in the process to create a `*Koodam*` in which they would interact with each other as equal persons engaged in the common purpose of learning from and with one another, without distinction of rank, position or privilege. The *koodam* is actually a traditional concept and practice in Tamil society. (with parallels like Choupal etc. in North India)

Koodam refers to the a geographical space in village which is held sacred

Where all participants meet as equal, adult members of society

And discuss on issues to arrive at consensus

Within *koodam*, the norms for relating as members are based on the acceptance that all are equal irrespective of differences in status, wealth and learning

Koodam is an honoured space, sacred because all participants value and respect it.

In a dramatic manner, the concept of the koodam helped establish a new sense of relating, belonging and purpose for the 150 Senior Officials who had been invited to be part of the exercise to bring about changes within the organization. The officials were of various ranks ranging from Chief Engineers to Assistant Engineers.

Integrating Learning through Field Visits

Intrinsic to the learning process was to integrate the critical and open reflection process initiated in workshops with actual field conditions. Based on the recommendations of participants of the preliminary workshops, field visits was incorporated as part of the training design so that members involved in the reflection exercise were made to engage with field conditions and include the perspectives of the people they were meant to serve. This part of the training matrix enabled a reality check and ensured that the reflective exercise was anchored in actual village conditions.

4. *The Churning Process: Some Glimpses*

Over a period of 4-5 days participating members explored numerous issues covering their work. While the workshops generated a considerable volume of documentation, some of the more important outcomes are shared to give a glimpse of the churning process underway in the organisation.

Understanding the water crisis: Am I Part of the Problem?

An important issue that needed to be addressed was for the participants to consider the question as to (i) whether there was a water problem at all, and (ii) if they all felt that there was indeed a problem, then where they saw themselves vis-à-vis the problem!

This exercise was the most challenging and difficult of exercises, but nevertheless a crucial stage to be crossed. Different methods were adopted depending on the group.

A case study followed by a game called the '**Survival Exercise**' was also played which sought to address the issue of making difficult choices without excluding others. An important learning point was the realization that only when a problem is understood properly will appropriate or sound solutions be found. The exercise was then contrasted with the specifics of the water management situation in rural areas of Tamil Nadu.

While there was initially strong resistance, both at the conscious and unconscious levels, to self critically examine their own role in the water crisis, as the workshop progressed, members were more willing to accept that they had a role both in being part of the problem, as also in being part of the solution. While there were different levels at which participants responded, at the end of all workshops, most participants because of the Koodam were considerably open and non-defensive to looking at the varieties of issues involved in reforming the rural water management sector, including about the need to change themselves and the way they functioned.

Polling on Core issues:

Sl. No.	Description	Yes	No
		%	%
1	Over drawal of ground water is a major reason for Unsustainable water supply	85	15
2	More allotment of funds would help sustainability	22	78
3	Women are rarely consulted and involved in planning a drinking Water supply scheme	71	29
4	Lack of appropriate design causes unsustainable WS	73	27
5	Community should have decisive say in decision making (technology options / costs)	100	0
6	With appropriate training and orientation community Members can handle technical problems	79	21
7	Lack of consistent policies lead to unsustainable water Supply	91	9

The Adapted Jo-Hari Window

The Jo-Hari Window was adapted to the workshop needs, to create awareness of the prevalence of blind spots, at both individual and institutional levels and to provoke exploration about the effect of such blind spots.

There was a marked difference between the views before and after the discussions following the field visits. It should be noted that sometimes some factors appear in more than one box; they only reflect issues around which the division in opinion was equally split amongst participating members.

The Combined Jo-Hari Window Representation – Before Discussion

		COMMUNITY	
		Has a role	Play No Role
TWAD	Has A Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Change of Water Source • Overdrawal of water • Ground water depletion • Mismanagement of distribution • Inefficient use of traditional water sources • Lack of community involvement in management • Negative mindset • Cultural and behavioral mindset • Lack of policy if water conservation • Wastage / water leakage • Industrial pollution of water source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TWAD is responsible for lack of community management • Inadequate water sources
TWAD	Plays/ Has No role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mismanagement of distribution • Inefficient use of traditional water sources • Lack of community involvement in management • Pit taps/unequal distribution • Negative mindset • Ground water depletion • Wastage / water leakage • Population pressure on water • Political interference • Illegal sand mining in rivers • Cropping pattern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of village level authority to manage water • Political interference • Drought • Lack of consistent Environmental policy • Free schemes • Multiple agencies for WS • Illegal sand mining in river beds

The Combined Jo-Hari Window Representation – After Catharsis

		COMMUNITY	
		Has a role	Play No Role
T W A D	Has A role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Change of Water Source • Overdrawal of water • Ground water depletion • Mismanagement of distribution • Inefficient use of traditional water sources • Lack of community involvement in management • Negative mindset • Cultural and behavioral mindset • Lack of policy if water conservation • Wastage / water leakage • Industrial pollution of water source • Mismanagement of distribution • Inefficient use of traditional water sources • Lack of community involvement in management • Pit taps/unequal distribution • Negative mindset • Ground water depletion • Wastage / water leakage • Weakness of village level authority to manage water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TWAD is responsible for lack of community management • Inadequate water sources
	Plays / Has No role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Population pressure on water</i> • <i>Political interference</i> • <i>Illegal sand mining in rivers</i> • <i>Cropping pattern</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Political interference</i> • <i>Drought</i> • <i>Lack of consistent Environmental policy</i> • <i>Free schemes</i> • <i>Multiple agencies for WS</i> • <i>Illegal sand mining in river beds</i>

In actuality the exercise challenged the participants to think 'out of the box' by compelling them to reflect on issues which they had either never considered to be their responsibility or something in which they alone had a role. At the end of the exercise many participant had changed their understanding of their role as not only involving exercising responsibility in the specific areas of their expertise and competencies but also in becoming pro-active, change agents catalysing other departments too to arrive at a more holistic, integrated and comprehensive sustainable solution to the water crisis confronting the state. The most interesting shift was from seeing the issue from the prism of only the technical department to comprehending the challenge from a larger, socially and professionally inclusive perspective.

Force Field Analysis– *Creating Strategic Action Plans*

One of the most important set of activities of the entire workshop revolved round the Force Field Activity exercise. Participants were introduced to the fact that any change process was continually subjected to contend with supportive or resisting (obstructive) forces, which emanate from both internal and external sources. Members were then guided to identify these forces separately in the specific context of the rural water supply. The next exercise was to categorise these forces into 5 sub-categories in both supportive and resisting forces.

The usefulness of Forces Field Analysis was not that it was teaching anything new to those who had been dealing with interest groups for many years. The method was useful in helping identify forces in a conscious, deliberated manner and then studying what role each 'force' plays in supporting or obstructing a process of change.

The exercise enabled working to identify measures to enhance supportive forces and to tackle resistive or obstructive forces. The combined effect was to help evolve strategic action plans for implementation change projects in select villages.

SUPPORTIVE FORCES	RESISTIVE FORCES
Integrate (Necessary) VWSC, Women, Youth, Children and Village Panchayat	Adjust (Irritant) Frequent policy and paradigm shift. Lack of uniform policy across the sector. Change in political leadership
Assimilate (Contribute) NGO, WSHG, CBO, Village level functionaries of line departments Community leaders, Social workers	Bypass (Obstacle) Obstructive NGO, Village Factions Disruptive elements, Initial community resistance
Associate (Support) District Administration, Elected Representatives	Neutralize (Opposition) Political interference Community reluctance to change
Accommodate (Assist / Useful) PTA Educational Institution Local religious institutions Rural Welfare organization	Isolate (Impossibility) Negative elements Dominating groups Lack of village unity
Attract Students Youth WSHG Decision makers, women	Eliminate (Negate) Lack of uniform evaluation criteria Conflict finding pattern and operation Unhealthy habits Dependency on doles

Village Visit: Learning from critiquing existing schemes

During the workshops, the participants were divided into teams, which visited three villages. During debriefing discussions, critical questions were raised about the various projects found in the villages and whether they stood to scrutiny based on the varieties of issues covered during the workshop, especially from the view point of stake holders.

The Board's own projects in the village were analysed in terms of it's environmental- economic need / impact, and the importance of studying viability of the scheme in terms of sustainability and cost of O & M. The field reality through the glasses of hindsight, in the context of the present water scarcity, really shook up the participants.

‘Maraimalainagar Declaration’

The series of Change Management Workshops culminated with a major break through in the fourth workshop held at Marimalai Nagar. The churning process resulted in evolving a new paradigm of operation by the engineers themselves. This came to be known as the ‘*Maraimalainagar Declaration*’.

The Maraimalai Nagar Declaration

We will evaluate the existing schemes and ensure that the schemes are put into optimal use first.

Then rehabilitation will be undertaken wherever necessary along with revival of traditional sources.

This will be taken up before taking up any new schemes in the block,

We will all aim at 10 % increase in coverage with the same budget.

Evolving Concentric Circle of Consensus on MM Nagar declaration

Initially there was resistance and opposition to the declaration among the officials/organisation. Some saw in it a criticism of past policy; others saw it as striking at the core of the functioning of the organisation and felt that the declaration not saying anything new. Yet others saw it as articulating something that many felt, but had not yet put together as a perspective for action. In order to evolve a consensus, discussions were initiated at formal and informal level throughout the organisation on the Maraimalainagar Declaration. Naturally issues of water crisis, sustainability and the role of TWAD and the need to initiate change came to be debated.

Despite the contested nature of the Declaration, slowly a consensus evolved that the Declaration was not only acceptable but also required to be pushed through inside the organisation, with the involvement of other stakeholders too. The process of widening the consensus and ensuring implementation was strengthened by bringing on board District Collectors, policy makers and other opinion makers who then endorsed the declaration.

What is noteworthy is that the declaration was also shared with a cross section of civil society too. The build up of support ensured that the Maraimalainagar Declaration did not remain, as a rhetorical statement but became an article of faith, guiding future interventions across the state.

The adoption of the Maraimalainagar Declaration, and the subsequent endorsement by the Secretary, Municipal Administration & Water Supply Department and Managing Director, TWAD, and other senior officials set the stage for the next phase of the transformation exercise in the organisation

6. Pioneering Change: Consolidating the Transformation Process

Formation of the Change Management Group (CMG)

The increasing acceptance and implementation of MM Nagar declaration pushed the change process to the next phase emphasizing the need for formation of a core group at the state level, which would spearhead all change activities. Whether members decided to undertake change projects aimed at increasing employee morale or on evolving a comprehensive database or on conducting similar training interventions it soon became apparent that all future change or transformation efforts would need to be coordinated and planned. This led to the formation of a Change Management Group (CMG) at the state level.

Building on the spirit of the koodam, CMG members were those who volunteered to be part of the exercise. Their work as CMG participants would be over and beyond their regular work and they would not get any special concessions or rewards for being CMG members. Care was taken to ensure that the CMG was a representative body having representatives from different age groups, covering all the regions of the state and having a cross section of people. The newly formed CMG evolved its own mandate for functioning:

- To work further on the outcome & strategize for change.
- To develop skills in managing change through Pilot Projects.
- To be an in-house group to dialogue with the rest of the system.
- Empowering – capacity building & creating a core team to envision and lead the change process.
- Covering all employees as associates

After detailed deliberation and introspection at both formal and informal levels the CMG members decided to identify and imbibe certain values by which they like to be recognized. The group committed itself to upholding of these values in all their transactions as individuals or as an organisation.

CMG Values

We collectively resolve to adhere, adopt and imbibe the following values.

- **Voluntary Membership:** We are self -committed, self -propelled and self –reliant
- **Revolutionary:** We shall be pioneering the partnership revolution
- **Self-Evaluating:** We are willing to analyze, learn and if necessary correct ourselves
- **Trust:** We value trust among colleagues and the community.
- **Dedication:** We dedicate ourselves to our collective vision.
- **Empathy:** We empathize with fellow human beings.
- **Democratic:** In any and every activity we will adopt a democratic approach.
- **Team spirit:** We work together as one.
- **Courageous:** We have courage to stand steadfast for our beliefs.
- **Belonging:** We have a strong sense of belongingness.
- **Respecting others:** Listening, analyzing and accepting views & options of one and all

Change Projects

The CMG initiated change projects to demonstrate to itself and to the rest of the organisation its commitment to the change process as well as to show case the potential uncovered by the process. The CMG took up change projects around three broad areas of activities:

- **People Oriented**, focusing on impact on people, both internally as also outside the organisation.
- **Task Oriented**, focusing on issues related to work and the formal areas of organisational functioning, and
- **Process Oriented**, encompassing issues of communication systems, decision making processes within the organisation, leadership within the organisation and other related issues.

Different projects were identified in the three areas as described below.

People Oriented

- Community Water Supply and Sanitation Micro Plans
- Institution building - Village user committee formation in Grama Sabha
- Reviving of traditional water bodies

- Ground Water Demand Management
- School children involvement, “**Our Water**”

Task Oriented

- Spot settlement of Audit paras
- e-group formation and interaction among members

Process Oriented

- Koodam internalization – Monthly meetings
- Creation of new koodams – practicing at district offices
- News letter – encrypting the activities and sharing experiences
- District level CMG launching and broad basing

7. Democratisation of Water Management Project

Outcomes of 472 Villages under 145 Village Panchayats across 29 Districts.

The capacity building intervention was from the beginning conceptualized in field reality. A lab to field approach was adopted wherein all the engineers involved in the change process also worked with these new principles in selected villages in their Districts. It was visualized as laying the basis of a more sustained reintegration of the essential work system and work culture within the organization. The field projects were the testing grounds for experimenting the learning of the Workshop. In a sense, the project villages were the experimental workspace to implement many of the concepts learnt through the exploratory process of group learning in the Workshop.

There was a symbiotic relationship between the workshop and the project villages, which were used as laboratories to test the newfound insights of democratic water management and exorcise their minds of the apprehensions of giving a voice and choice to the community. The statewide projects involved about 80 Rural Water Supply sub divisions of TWAD Board. The focus of the project was to take up a holistic approach to water supply by involving the community in formulation, implementation and subsequent management of water supply system including reviving of traditional practices. The fruits of this new way of thinking and working, started manifesting early, highlighting the potential of such change processes in improving the delivery systems of vital services.

Some of the important outcomes were in the following areas: -

Community contribution: -

As a measure of the involvement of the community and it's sense of ownership, the project has envisaged 10% of the capital cost as community contribution, in cash or labour. Over a period of one year the community has contributed **Rs.13.5 million** in cash apart from various shramdans. Nearly **35,000 households** have contributed to implement water supply or recharge schemes in 145 village panchayats.

Cost Reduction: -

One of the most significant impacts, which portray the inherent potential of this process of personal and institutional change, is the reduction in the capital cost per HH by 40% in the Project villages. It has been found that the average cost per HH in SRP schemes was about Rs.4,436/-(on habitation basis) whereas in the Pilot Batch the average cost is only Rs.1,555/-(on village basis) . In real terms this means possibility of additional coverage of four lakh households every year, within the same budget.

Cost Effective solutions:-

Nearly 50% of the schemes (106 out of 210) are low capital intensive, focusing mostly on rehabilitation, EPL, MPP/HP. This reflects a different way of decision-making, based on community ownership, choice and willingness to manage the operating costs.

Better Targeting:-

In the project about 65% of the schemes have targeted villages with more than 50% BPL population. This is in sharp contrast to the generally low targeting of regular schemes.

Savings:-

In line with the Maraimalai Nagar declaration many of the Districts have taken up vigorous scrutiny of all investment proposals, in the search of sustainable and cost effective solution. The savings over the annual budget has been as high as Rs.10.70 million in Namakkal, and Rs.16.60 million in Virudhunagar District (varying from 8% to 33% of the budget). In fact in Namakkal the District team has utilized the savings to take up a unique community participatory source rehabilitation programme in 220 habitations by involving the community in decision making and financing the projects.

Planning:-

In all the 145 village panchayats detailed village water supply master plans were prepared by the community with the assistance of the engineers and approved in the Grama Sabha. The Master Plans had sub plans on ground water recharge, water quality and environmental issues including subsequent management and financing issues. Only those schemes, which figured in the approved WS Master Plans, were taken up for implementation

Institution Building:-

It was felt necessary to provide a formal forum for the community to spearhead its water and sanitation interventions. For this purpose Village Water and Sanitation Committees were proposed in all the project villages. In all 157 VWSCs were formed in the project villages by the community with the approval of the Grama Sabha. The unique feature of the VWSC was that there was a positive bias towards the disadvantaged. The women self-help group leader was the treasurer of the VWSC and 1/4th membership was earmarked for women. The community was also convinced to provide adequate representation to SC and ST population of the village. TWAD Board engineers had many structured and informal interactions with the VWSC and focus groups for capacity building and to assist in tackling water and sanitation issues of the village including mobilizing the community towards self-management.

Conservation and recharge:-

The finiteness of water availability was a constant message of the project. The community was encouraged to take up ground water recharge activities including revival of traditional water bodies as a first step to revisit historical practices of community living and sharing of scarce resources. Water balance studies informing the status of water availability at micro level, for the village, was carried out in all the 145 village panchayats and shared with the community. The community also participated in the physical implementation of 45 ground water recharge schemes. In all the project villages special Grama Sabhas were convened on October 2nd and 26th January to take up cleaning and revival of traditional water bodies.

8. *The Journey Continues ... Next steps*

The encouraging response to the various change projects initiated by the CMG and other members of TWAD and the gradually evolving external support for the efforts of the CMG led the CMG to prepare for the second year of the larger transformation exercise: to institutionalize change management within the practice and praxis of the organisation and to begin the process of exploring issues impacting on working relationships, work culture and performance within the organisation.

Daring to dream !

An intrinsic issue which was taken up was evolving a common vision for themselves and the organisation. Apart from the values that they believed in for themselves, CMG members began the process of collectively sharing their dreams for their organisation and their work. Out of this process emerged the vision for the organisation.

OUR DREAM, OUR VISION

Secure Water for all, forever

- Conservation of nature as a guarantee for the future water
- Vibrant, revived and recharged water bodies
- Assured, equitable and sustainable water for all
- *Successful community managed water supply system through active participation including women and poor*
- Safe disposal of solid and liquid waste for clean and healthy environment
- Cost effective technology options to ensure Local maintenance and sustainable
- Financial management.
- Formation of Common Water Regulatory Authority for judicious use of water for all sectors.

The vision as drafted was shared throughout the organisation at the district and field level and was endorsed on World Water Day 2005 by the organisation and policy makers. It was also shared with the community in the 145 project village panchayats.

Towards Total Community Water Management

To breathe life and to give concrete shape to the vision, the CMG has taken up a community based project in 100 villages across the State. As a first step to achieving the dream, it has undertaken to implement a time bound project to test out some of the essential learnings of the various change efforts initiated by them. Out of this process emerged the community based project titled, '**Total Community Water Management**'. The essential ingredients of the TCWM project are outlined below:

- Encompassing the Vision, CMG set itself to work with the community towards
- improved systems and system management for better service delivery
 - protecting and improving the source potentiality

- revival of all traditional water bodies for other uses and recharge
- ensuring equitable water supply especially to weaker sections
- a clean environment in and around water drawal points
- regular dis-infection practice and periodical water quality testing
- better O&M practice for low user cost
- judicious use of scarce water and to undertake
- conservation measures
- practice of waste water reuse and recycling
- consensus in Gram Sabha regarding regulatory measures
- “Reaching the Unreached”

9. Democratisation of Water Management

The overarching conceptual framework that has emerged as the well spring of the entire transformation exercise currently underway in the organisation is the theme of 'Democratisation of Water Management'. The various activities which have been initiated all go to support the democratisation process within and outside the organisation. While the finer details of the democratisation process are still being fleshed out, the core principles around which the change effort is currently being constructed can be described to encompass the following:

Inside TWAD	Democratisation Parameters	With the Community
Ensure free flow of information across different levels.	1. Information flow	Share all necessary information including transparency about schemes.
Choice of strategies and methods made in informed manner and after broad based deliberations	2. Choice	Enabling and ensuring choices made democratically and by the people themselves.
Decisions are made with widest possible involvement of all groups and based on acceptance of decisions by all concerned	3. Decision making 1) Consensus model 2) Inclusive.	Encourage and ensure that decisions are made securing participation of all stakeholders, seeking to build consensus at all stages and ensuring equity.
All sections own up for decisions, accept individual and collective responsibility and remain accountable for ensuring equity based water management.	4. Accountability, responsibility and ownership	Community owns all schemes and assumes responsibility for implementation, management and control.

Conclusion

The experience in the “democratization of water management project” have thrown up lot of learnings for the policy makers, the organization as well as for the individuals involved in the project. Many of these learnings are diffuse in nature at the moment as the process is still unfolding. The experiences would normally enter into the organization’s oral lore following the oral tradition of India. We have sought to capture the experiences of change not merely to record the history but also as a means to help others learn from our experiences.

The Change Management Group (CMG), the offshoot of this change process has attempted to bring these field level change processes into the formal organisational memory by documenting the varied experiences and outcomes of the change process. It may be important to stress at this point that these are just glimpses of the plethora of issues which have been thrown up by this churning at the field level. All the same this is a very important document for those who will follow. Through this document we seek to share not only our experiences but to invite you to join our journey to Democratise Water Management and improve delivery systems in critical sectors.

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