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**Tamil Nadu Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (TNRWSP)
Intensive Learning Review in Pilot Village Panchayats under TNRWSP**

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Maharaasana Irruppinga!!

***The 'Change Management' TWAD Engineer –
Trials and Tribulations of a Successful Metamorphosis***

Report of the Field Study in 15 Villages of Tamil Nadu, India
April, 2006
By
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Introduction

Enga thanneer prachanayai theerthatharku ... ***Maharaasana Irruppinga!!***
TWAD engineers ellorukkum enga nanriyai theriyunga!!

“For solving our water problems, you will forever be blessed with fortune!
Please say thanks to all the TWAD Engineers!!”

On a scorching April afternoon, as we wound our way in the forbiddingly dry interior fields of Palangarai village in Avinashi Taluka of Coimbatore District meeting the village residents to find out if water supply had improved, an old, lady, gnarled with age, slowly walked to the place where we were sitting. She had heard that some water engineers had come. She also wanted to record her sentiments.

Holding my hand, she looked into my eyes and expressed the hope that she lived long enough to see her dream of decades come true in which her village had become green and verdant with vegetation and there was water for all, throughout the year. Even as I was trying to completely understand what she was saying the old lady

¹ ***Total Community Water Management*** – a detailed plan of action evolved by the water engineers of TWAD Board (Tamil Nadu Water Supplies and Drainage Board) to achieve their Vision for water. The CMG engineers are a voluntary group of engineers from TWAD who were pioneering and spearheading the 'Democratisation of Water Management' change programme in the south Indian State of Tamil Nadu between 2004-06.

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pointed out to the Panchayat President and the TWAD Board Engineers, Mr. Thangaraj (Assistant Executive Engineer) and Mr. Asokan (Assistant Engineer) who were standing at a distance and told me in a quiet voice, “If these three continue to bring about the changes they have been trying to in the last 2 years, very soon I can die contented seeing my dream turn true ... and I believe you are their teacher! God bless you all so that you can continue to make our lives better”.

“Maharaasana Iruppinga!!”.

The emotionally loaded gratitude of the old lady captured in the two words were found reverberating in different parts of the state where the TWAD engineers had been working to make their vision of a more water secure future for the state of Tamil Nadu real. Over the last 2 years, even as they engaged in long deliberations inside the workshop and meeting *koodams* or meeting places, many amongst them had been struggling and sweating it in the field to translate their newly gained perspectives and understanding on water conservation and community involvement into real life processes. Through trial and errors, and more importantly by learning to apply the various skills and perspectives they had learnt in the workshops, they had begun the process of changing the way the water engineer works in the village. Like the snake moulting, shedding the old skin only to gain a new cover for itself, slowly and imperceptibly, many of the TWAD engineers who had embraced the change process had started the process of transforming the way they related to their work and the community and thereby impacting on the way the entire water sector utility was functioning.

The results of their efforts are now slowly manifesting in multilayered achievements. While the more important issues of the extent of contribution for schemes and the collection of O & M charges from water users (whether HSC or PF), has obviously been the focus of attention of policy makers, a much more subtle and major change has been initiated by the engineers which throws valuable light into future change efforts in water utilities anywhere in the world.

This study is the result of one such effort to capture what is happening in the ‘sinews and veins’ of the inner functioning of TWAD. Even as we write this report we are filled with a feeling of disquiet: “Can we completely capture in words the fascinating stories which now abound in the landscape of the TNRWSSP villages?”

We hope the readers will also share the emotions and feelings which have gone into the way the engineers have slogged it in the Tamil rural landscape to ensure water supply based on the three values they determined for themselves: the importance of reaching the unreached based on a sense of equity and equitable supply while ensuring sustainability of the water system.

I

The beginning

It was in early 2004, a few months after the official launch of the TNRWSP, and after several months of numerous workshops, meetings and conferences amongst the water engineers that an issue kept arising at frequent intervals: why was there difficulty in getting the engineers to become more people friendly, or as the official terminology defined it, “to change from being water providers to facilitators”. The issue that gradually became clearer was that it was not merely an issue of definition, there was a clear cut problem in the way the organization was responding to the changed definitional framework of the water engineer presented in the policy.

From this started a process of internal reflection. Starting tentatively with the focus of looking at issues of attitudinal change, slowly it became quite apparent that while engineers started re-examining their notions of work, relationship amongst themselves internally and with the community externally, all this had to be foregrounded on the vision they had of the water sector and their role in ensuring water security. The churning threw up the ‘Vision’ for the department, which came to be evolved in a collaborative, participatory manner by a ‘Change Management Group’ formed by volunteers drawn from throughout the state utility. The draft vision statement was then taken for discussion with other engineers throughout the state and with important stakeholders groups to finally become crystallized as the 7 point VISION for the department.

The next challenge was to give concrete shape to the Vision in terms of the working strategy to achieve the 7 points of the vision. This led to the formulation of what later came to be known as ‘Total Community Water Management’ (TCWM).

The TCWM was a combination of a work book, milestones indicator, motivating tool and a kit book of ideas.

Between them, the Vision and the TCWM became important components of the engineers 'basket of ideas' to be adapted for implementation in each village given the peculiarities of local history, caste and community composition, economic forces and processes and so on. Along with the attitudinal changes they had undergone in the intensive workshops, the work options presented by the vision and the TCWM indicators became potent tools assisting the water board engineer as they set about experimenting building new partnerships with the local community.

As we shall shortly see in this report, the engineers, irrespective of level in the Boards hierarchy has played an important and crucial role in the transformation of water crisis afflicted villages to become water secure community settings. We shall explore the changes in four broad categories:

- (1) Change in the Role and behaviour of water engineers in
 - (i) expanding his traditional technical role;
 - (ii) relationship with the Village Panchayat President (VPP);
 - (iii) relationship with community / VWSC.
 - (iv) Sensitivity in relating to Dalits.
 - (v) Strategising to take water schemes forward vis-à-vis children, youth, SHGs etc.
- (2) Changing role of Village Panchayat President in terms of
 - (i) Playing a leadership role rather than a partisan role.
 - (ii) Motivating different sections to become involved in water conservation and participate in democratizing water management in the village.
- (3) Changing relationship between the Water Engineer, VPP, Community vis-à-vis conservation, sustainability and change management.
- (4) Response of different social segments to issues O & M charges and contribution.

What is striking about the change processes underway is that even engineers who are yet to undergo sensitivity training are reporting being influenced by the changed working style initiated by others in the department. As we shall see later on in this report such engineers are adapting themselves to the 'Change management'

strategies and as they experience positive responses, are slowly incorporating the changed attitudes, perspectives and values into their regular functioning.

II

1. Change in the Role and behaviour of water engineers.

(i) Expanding his traditional technical role.

Conventionally the water engineer in the TWAD Board perceived his role to be circumscribed by engineering function of planning, designing and executing water projects, and once completed, to hand over the newly created water facility to the Village Panchayat for further operation and maintenance. Once handed over, the engineer was no longer involved with the issue of the manner in which the local body was maintaining the scheme, whether they were safeguarding the water source and whether people were paying user charges.

All this changed once the engineer accepted that he was responsible for realizing the new vision for the department which amongst other things talked of

- “Conservation of nature as a guarantee for future water.
- Vibrant, revived and recharged water bodies.
- Assured, equitable and sustainable water for all.
- Successful community managed water supply system through active
- Participation of all, especially women and poor.”

The new vision required a number of attitudinal shifts within the engineer. His role now encompassed a critical social thrust which could not be implemented unless he changed in his emotional and mental make up, his attitude to people, society and environment. In effect, he had to transform himself from being an engineer per se to become a social engineer with a mix of activist zeal, imbued with a wider perspective and incorporating values of openness, transparency and fairness in practice.

The follow up activities to the workshop learning process had an important role in facilitating the engineers to rise up to the new expectations from them. After having played rather staid, highly defined roles, it was not at all easy to embrace newer styles of functioning. As the Assistant Engineer in Thumbaipatti village in Madurai village, Mr. Mariappan, described it, “I was forced to rethink and come up with new ways of

relating to the local people and enthusing them to get involved in ensuring sustainable water system for their own village”. An important learning point pointed out by him from his own experience was to invert the traditional process of asking people for their water needs and suggesting technical solutions. In his inimitable style he remarked, “I had to first gain the absolute trust and confidence of the people first, before talking of other things. Something which sounds simple now, I had to actually learn through the workshop. Therein lies the irony of our practice!”

In Pagalmedu village too, the Assistant Engineer, Mr. Settu was challenged to expand his role and to help the local community find creative solutions to local problems. The village in Thiruvallur district had been afflicted with serious water scarcity owing to continuous failure of monsoons and drought even though the village was on the banks of the river Kosasthalaiyar. In comparison with nearby villages however, the village was able to tap a local aquifer for water. In fact this water aquifer is also the source of water to several other neighbouring panchayats. As a consequence of recurrent drought, agriculture, which was the mainstay of livelihoods for the village residents, especially poorer women, had totally collapsed. In such a situation, the task of asking people to voluntarily contribute to a new scheme was not just unthinkable but also suicidal as the next question invariably was, “When I do not have money to feed my children, how you can ask me to contribute for a new scheme?”

Under these circumstances, the Assistant Engineer was forced to study the nature of local employment market, agricultural practices and water availability. From this came the idea of suggesting to local people to change agricultural practices and to initiate floriculture. The flowers grown like marigold, roses and so on required much less water while providing employment to local women. The harvested flowers had a shorter gestation period too. The daily output could be sold in the nearby city markets. What happened as a consequence of this suggestion was that a number of agriculturists shifted to floriculture. Over a period of months, the flower output slowly added to local economic surplus. As slowly economic condition improved, it served to motivate others to follow suit thereby improving the economic situation of many families. The engineer was no longer a distant person who came in a jeep; he was now their saviour, a friend and trusted guide. The community was now more ready and

willing to respond to the issues of water conservation raised by him. As Mr. Settu, the water engineer himself explained:

“It was only in the change management workshop that I became sensitized to looking at myself and the way I responded to villagers. I realized that I had internalized the notion that as the engineer I knew more than the villagers and that I should keep a distance from them. I would only interact with the Panchayat President and leaders of the village; I rarely visited the houses of people and relate with them as human beings with their own feelings, values and experiences. It was painful realization that I had actually distanced myself from the people and that unless I changed the way I related to people no change is possible. I also needed to be sensitive to the sentiments of dalits and their inherited problems of social exclusion by actually interacting with them socially and in their spaces”.

This seemingly very ordinary and simple issue, nevertheless is one of the most difficult issues facing officialdom at all levels. The reality is that over many years of practice, officialdom in reality has insulated itself from people, not just physically, but also emotionally and mentally. This becomes the first issue to confront.

Again the experience of Mr. Settu is instructive. As he took that extra effort to befriend people, genuinely getting to know their lives and practices, people became less distrustful and suspecting of him. As gradually a relationship based on mutual respect and valuing opinions grew, the willingness of the community to experiment and innovate also proportionally grows. Even in faction ridden villages, if the engineer is seen as a fair, impartial and concerned person, different contending groups seem to be willing to cooperate on essential activities like water supply.

Numerous illustrations are now documented from throughout TWAD covering many districts of Tamil Nadu which clearly reveals the impact bringing about attitudinal changes amongst engineers has brought about. Another Assistant Engineer in Madurai District celebrated his daughter's birthday in the village calling the children of the village for an afternoon event of fun and games. The Assistant Engineer in Tirupur, Mr. Asokan and Assistant Executive Engineer, Mr. Thangaraj, Coimbatore have started visit the village during festive occasions apart from Gram Sabhas.

It is important to highlight however that changed behaviour practices on the part of the engineers are not undertaken as an artificial, strategic action. Wherever

engineers have genuinely reflected on their values and roles, and their changed behaviour reflects sensitivity to the different social sections, in those places the response of the community is markedly better. The change of behaviour needs to come about as a result of rethinking of roles, responsibilities and relationships.

2. Changes in the Relationship with the Village Panchayat President (VPP)

An interesting feature in almost all the villages which form part of this study is the change in the nature of relationship with the Village Panchayat President (VPP). The relationship between the water engineer and the VPP is in turn impacted by the operation of the following factors, which are stated more to illustrate rather than as an exhaustive compilation.

- (i) The degree of popularity and respect enjoyed by the VPP.
- (ii) The willingness to innovate and experiment and try new methods of community mobilization, implement new ideas in design and conservation and so on.
- (iii) The social capital in the village, in terms of availability of support and consensus within (a) the panchayat, (b) VWSC and SHGs and (c) other village residents who are able to support her/him in his endeavours.
- (iv) The existence of factions and opposition groups, and their involvement and non-involvement in village affairs, especially in the water schemes.

The VPP of Maharajapuram village in Virudunagar District, Mr. G. Karuppan, is an example of a visionary leader and the manner in which his leadership style influences the nature of water scheme introduced in the village. As a VPP Mr. Karuppan enjoyed wide respect from members of the community. He was able to mobilize Rs.1000/- from 234 households totaling Rs. 2,34,000/- though the contribution needed was only Rs.1.75 lakhs. 543 houses now have HSCs and are regularly contributing to O&M charges. His leadership in motivating the VWSC to strive for greater involvement in the water management has been a factor in greater involvement of local people resulting in better O & M collection.

Similarly in Palangarai village near Tirupur, the VPP is a charismatic, strong person who leads by setting the example. Inheriting a village water table which was almost 1200 feet deep, his options for solving the water crisis were rather limited.

However as the TWAD engineers came back from the CMG workshops charged with a sense of mission and purpose and armed with newer perspectives to address the water issue the VPP became their partner in forging a new alliance to collectively address the water issue. A series of seminars, meetings and discussions were initiated in which the engineers highlighted a variety of technical options focusing largely in water conservation, improvement of water sources through afforestation, construction of check dams and so on, the VPP slowly built consensus within the community. Very importantly he identified a cadre of young people who would be given the task of carrying the new plans forward. The combined efforts of the TWAD engineers and the VPP resulted in a highly enthusiastic body of volunteers in the 9 different settlements who literally became the water warriors!

Another illustration which serves to highlight the important role the VPP can play is from Ramainahally Village in Morappur Panchayat Union in Dharmapuri District. Mr. Raghunathan, the VPP had embarked on a unique protest in 2004 to record the displeasure of the local community over continued lack of solution for drinking water problem from official bodies. In a widely publicized manner, the village panchayat conducted a marriage of donkeys as a mark of protest and to highlight the acute water problem being faced by the villagers. He also led protests of local villagers before the District Collector and others. Leading from the front and not shirking from taking hard decisions brought the VPP closer to the community. It was in such a setting that attracted by the press coverage, the TWAD Board AEE, Mr. Pachaiappan visited the village. A quick assessment of the water situation made it apparent that a new strategy had to be crafted which included finding a new water source while at the same time encouraging people to practice water conservation practices. The duo adopted very creative methods including informing the local police as also the District Administration about the new vision in TWAD and the importance of cutting down on illegal connections. Thus when there was public outcry to the removal of all excess public fountains and water connections, the police counseled to the local residents about the need to adopt the new practices sought to be introduced in the village!

Kadirampatti village in Erode Taluka is an example of a VPP with the interest and vision to initiate forward looking water conservation programmes constrained by the reality of having to battle contending factions within the village. The VPP who

belongs to a prominent party, had to fight against rivals from his own party inside the village, apart from others belonging to other opposition parties. All this had a restraining effect in the implementation of schemes in the village. Recognizing this handicap of a lack of political cohesion in the village, the Assistant Engineer, Mr. Thirunavukarasu, took effort to ensure that he was not seen as biased to any one group. While working with the VPP on finding new sources for water and evolving water conservation practices, he also ensured that the water project was not made victim to factional politics. One way out of this otherwise fractious and non-productive context was to focus on other players. With the support of the VPP, the AE took classes for school children, youth and SHG members. His focus also shifted to empowering SHG members to participate more fully in the activities. All this paid off, when the actual time of launching the water scheme was reached. By then having tasted the fruit of better organized water delivery system, people were willing to consider raising donations for the new scheme as also to pay monthly O & M charges. However the existence of factions makes it difficult to expand the number of HSC connections as also to collect PF charges in some of the hamlets.

3. Changing relationship between the Water Engineer, VPP, Community vis-à-vis conservation, sustainability and change management: Creation of Partnerships, Valuing Local Knowledge and Managing Equitable Supply

The combined effect of change in role of engineers, changed relationships between different stake holders and evolving a joint commitment and consensus to finding solutions for the water crisis gradually led to the evolution of a dynamic partnership between the various players. Once the community became partners in the search for solutions a whole series of very interesting processes were set in motion. We now turn our study to some of the more important processes underlying these trends.

Endal village in Tiruvannamalai village was suffering from acute ground water contamination due to continuous discharge of untreated waste water effluents from the nearby town. The consequent water shortage had become so problematic that the daily search for water had become a harsh struggle for water resulting in constant fights, quarrels and other hardships. Of the two options presenting themselves, one

was cost ineffective and involved extremely high O&M costs. The other option was to request another village 6 km away to share water which was not only aggressively opposed but also held out the threat of major violence. It was at this stage that the Assistant Engineer, Mr. Panneerselvam attended the Change Management workshop. One of the issues discussed was using traditional knowledge and folklore to locate new water sources and sites, which may have been used long ago and abandoned or forgotten.

After completing the training, the engineer started discussions with the local community about strategies for community involvement in conserving water supply, equitable supply and so on. He also stressed on the possibility of finding alternate water sources. After repeated discussions and deliberations with various sections of the village in their localities, a new information emerged from a senior citizen about the existence of a water source in a nearby forest. A vigorous search resulted in the location of a small, dilapidated well long forgotten and unused. Further geological tests revealed that it was capable of regular water supply. Today this well has become the main water supply source for the entire village. As one young girl said, “We now do not need to cycle 5 kms twice daily to fetch water; water is now coming to our street and has changed not just our water supply but our life styles itself!”.

In the same village, special care was also taken to include a Dalit member in the VWSC (Village Water and Sanitation Committee) and ensure that he always had the chance to air the demands, grievances and views of the dalit community. The village has a dominant upper caste dominated panchayat in which the dalits have always been excluded from participation at the pain of violent retribution. So the fact that the engineer took care to ensure that the dalit was given opportunity to participate slowly had a major effect in transforming the self confidence of the dalit community who slowly, but surely, started the process of claiming an equal share in village life. While the process is still unfolding, the sheer fact of equal participation is having its repercussion in terms of separate water supply system for dalit habitation. In turn improved satisfaction has resulted in improved O&M collection.

In Palangarai village near Tirupur town in Coimbatore district, the issue of equitable supply was a major conflict. Instead of the President trying to solve the problem by himself, the issue was presented as a challenge before the entire village.

Importantly an index of equitable supply was also presented to the residents as a measure of equity in supply: the amount of time to fill a pot and the importance that the time should be constant anywhere in the village. Apart from the fact of being included in finding a technical solution, being given more technical information helped the community perceive in concrete terms the basis of equitable supply! The community itself studied the problem threadbare across different geological zones, habitations, class differentiations and other such factors and finally came out with a solution in a transparent, open and inclusive manner. Being a consensus decision it was then made the basis for regulating water supply in the village.

A different experience was recounted in Thirupullani village of Ramanathapuram District. This village suffers from acute water scarcity despite having six *ooranies* which are generally dry throughout the year. Given the topography of the area, potable water is available only at shallow depths with water being saline at deeper depths. Scanty rainfall does not permit sufficient storage of water in the *ooranies*. The VPP. The TWAD engineer and the community along with the Panchayat Union decided to put up a retaining wall across the *Kottakkudi* river. A check dam had been built earlier in 1995 which had breached several years back. Most of the water was flowing into the sea. The newly constructed retaining wall was meant to direct the flowing excess water during rains to flow into a 30,000 litre sump some 500 metres away. The water thus collected is pumped by a 10 HP motor into an earthen channel which directs the water to a series of *ooranies* finally ending with filling up the Perumal temple *theppakulam* (tank where temple festivities are held). Locals brought to the attention of the team that the temple *theppakulam* was thus being filled up for the first time in 300 years! The other *ooranies* have been recharged and during the current hot spell is ensuring availability of ground water.

4. Response of different social segments to issues O & M charges and contribution to capital costs

In almost all the villages covered in the present survey one singular feature stands out: wherever water supply is regulated and sufficient quality of good quality

water is supplied in a transparent, fair manner the response of people to participate in the administration of the schemes is more forthcoming. The picture relating to the readiness to pay O & M charges and contribution to capital cost of scheme presents a varied divergent picture hard to collate into any order or to embark on a study of the factors.

In New Colony Dalit settlement of Thumbaipatti village there is almost 90% collection of monthly PF charges of Rs.10/-. Similarly the Public contribution of Rs. 1.80 Lakh was contributed by 1256 households in the following manner

| Contribution (in Rs) | No. of Households |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 20-25 | 282 |
| 50 | 279 |
| 100 | 327 |
| 150 | 41 |
| 200 | 130 |
| 300 | 69 |
| 500 | 66 |
| 700 | 27 |
| 1000 | 4 |
| 3000 | 1 |
| 10000 | 1 |

Chettikuruchi Panchayat, S.Pudur Panchayat Union in Sivaganga District present another dimension of collection of capital costs. Of the total amount of Rs.33,200/- required as people's contribution, the collection details are as follows:

| Contribution (in Rs) | No. of Households |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1000 | 5 |
| 500 | 34 |
| 700-800 | 10 |
| 300-400 | 8 |

A significant feature in this public contribution has been that 22 SC families contributed to the capital cost of the scheme as against 35 households from other castes.

Another noteworthy feature in this village which breaks the stereotype notion that SC's do or will not pay contributions to capital cost and that other castes will not

participate if the tank is located at or near the Dalit habitation. In this case the 10,000 litre OHT is actually inside the Dalit habitation.

In Maharajapuram village in Virudunagar District, 234 households contributed Rs.1000/- each towards capital costs totaling Rs.2,34,000/- The point to be noted here is that in this village excess money has been collected as the contribution to be collected was only pegged at Rs.1.75 lakhs. The excess money has been kept in the VWSC account in Fixed deposits in a local public sector bank.

Generally different methods have been adopted in the various panchayats to raise capital costs of schemes. In Pagalmedu village the Gramasabha fixed the following rates:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Households with concrete structures | Rs.250/- |
| Smaller houses | Rs.200/- |
| Tiled houses | Rs. 75/- |
| Huts | Rs. 50/- |

Through the above method the VWSC was able to collect the necessary contribution.

Another variety was tried in Ramainahalli where each SHG contributed Rs. 2,000/- each. This way the 10 SHGs contributed Rs.20,000/-. The rest of the money was collected from different sections of the village.

In most villages, due to the sustained educative campaign launched by the engineers, slowly a realization dawned that residents needed to contribute to feel a sense of ownership with the water system. Depending on the degree of involvement and intensity of effort in each village, the response varied. But generally all the villages presented a picture of agreement with the notion that the contribution was towards evolving a sense of right over the scheme; a right which could not be demanded rightfully without having to fear being castigated by government officials. This was visible in the discussion with different SHG members in Kadirampatti village in Erode District.

Keelvattakurichi village in Perambalur district and Vaiyampatti village in Trichy District also had similar experiences. Generally acceptability became greater once people had experienced the impact of the new schemes, viz., improved water supply at right times in right quantities.

Collection of PF charges

The picture that emerges relating to the willingness of communities to pay for PF charges is a mixed bag. In Endal village of Tiruvannamalai District the SC sections who had traditionally been excluded socially and economically from enjoying direct water supply felt more empowered when the AE ensured their participation at all stages of planning, decision making and implementation of the new scheme. Further, having been traditional victims of caste segregation and therefore less and erratic supply of water, the new system based on transparency in water supply time, information about water supply and other issues made the SCs conscious of the need to assert their demands. All this has resulted in better supply of water in the last 6-7 months. Having tasted the success of regulated and democratically managed water system they were ready to pay Rs.10/- as PF charges. In sharp contrast the caste hindu segment consisting of OBCs were the most vehemently opposed to any such collection.

Villages visited in Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Perambalur, Madurai, Virudunagar, Dharmapuri, Tiruvallur, Kanchipuram, all report similar processes. On one hand, the experience of improved water supply has made people more conscious of the importance of participating in the local management of their own water system. But the acceptance or opposition to payment of O&M charges in the case of PFs is for too many varied reasons that it is unsafe to hazard any categorization of the reasons.

One fact is clear however. Wherever villagers have come forward to pay PF charges, and there are a considerable number of habitations which have regularly paying PF members, then the catalyst role played by the TWAD engineer is visible. This much can be said, wherever greater awareness has been built up in those places there is greater willingness to even discuss, debate and in many instances, decide on payment of O & M charges.

Conclusion

The VPP of Ramainahalli, Mr. Raghunathan sums up best the critical core of the issue confronting the water sector:

“Good governance and community participation in water management is a priority for any successful implementation. People have struggled for water and hence know the importance of water conservation”.

At the heart of water sector reforms then is this central message: the need is not for more money or technology; but for better water governance based on the core values of conservation, democratic functioning, equity and reaching the unreached.

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