

Functional Review-

Water supply and Sanitation

The Administrative Reforms Committee set up by Government of Maharashtra in 2002 recommended to carry out Functional Review of State Departments and Yashada as an apt agency to carry out such a responsibility.

In response to this, in 2004, with support of the Ford Foundation, Yashada initiated Functional Review of 11 state departments. Yashada invited Dr. M. A. Ghare to carry out functional review of Department of water supply and sanitation. Mrs Ashwini Lele from DROIP assisted in drafting of the report.

Glossary and list of abbreviations can be found in the end.

ABSTRACT

Functional Review is a step in the process of realising the goal of 'good governance' and the exercise provides a chance to rationally look at the functioning of a department to analyse its actions in the light of the goal to be achieved. The 'functional review' exercise mainly aims at deciphering future actions for the better delivery of responsibilities of the government, in general, and reforms of civil services, in particular.

Initially the report sets the context by taking a quick review of evolution of policies for drinking water supply sector and for sanitation sector. This is followed by a short description of the structure of the department and its 'vision' and 'mission' statements. In the end findings of the study and suggestions are compiled for each section of the department namely GSDA, MJP, water supply departments at Zilla Parishads and RSPMU.

Executive Summary

Introduction

India and the world community have agreed to strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The MDGs are-

1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
2. Achieve Universal Primary Education
3. Procure Gender Equality and Empower Women
4. Reduce Child Mortality
5. Improve Maternal Health
6. Combat HIV/ AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability
8. Develop Global Partnership for Development

The water supply sector has direct and indirect links with these goals. Ensuring access to adequate potable drinking water is certainly critical for achieving these goals. More specifically, India along with the world has pledged to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without a sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

Ensuring 'Good Governance' in activities related to sustainable access to drinking water and basic sanitation is one of the key strategies to achieve the above objective.

The Government of Maharashtra has taken certain concrete steps towards achieving this goal; this includes the setting up of two committees, viz. the Godbole Committee on Good Governance and the Sukthankar Committee on Administrative Reforms. These committees have laid a path for future action by articulating objectives for achieving the goal of good governance. Both these committees have emphasised the need for downsizing, restructuring and reforming civil services based on the principle of Subsidiary, along with adhering to fiscal discipline and the practice of sound economic principles.

The 'functional review' exercise mainly aims to decipher future actions for the better delivery of responsibilities of the government, in general, and reforms of civil services, in particular. It is a step in the process of realising the goal of 'good governance' and provides a chance to rationally look at the functioning of a

department and analyse its actions in the light of the goal. It would now be appropriate to briefly review the evolution of policies related to this sector.

Evolution of the Drinking Water Supply Policy

During the British regime, the Government initiated the provision of drinking water, mainly to satisfy the water requirements of various cantonments and newly developed hill stations. Later it expanded its services to satisfy the needs of growing industrial centres and emerging urban centres.

After Independence, the Constitution of India identified drinking water supply as a State subject, and in Maharashtra, piped drinking water supply schemes became a symbol of development and prosperity. This was also justified for better health reasons. It was then a technology-driven process and multi-village schemes were implemented with the initiative of engineers employed by the Department, backed by local political leadership.

In 1954, the Government of India introduced a drinking water supply and sanitation programme under its Social Welfare Programme. Later the Government of India supported State Governments to identify villages facing drinking water problems. Based on its findings in 1972-73, the Government of India extended its help to State Governments through the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). The Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) later took up this programme. However, in 1977-78, the Government of India reintroduced this programme, since its performance under the MNP was not satisfactory.

In Maharashtra, the 1970s witnessed the establishment of the Ground Water Survey and Development Agency (GSDA). The GSDA was instrumental in tapping underground water sources all over Maharashtra. Traditionally, a majority of the villages depended on ground water sources for their drinking water supply and it continues to be so till date. The Government of Maharashtra also passed the Maharashtra Water Supply and Sewerage Board Act in 1976 (MWSSB Act).

In 1986, the Government of India decided to take a mission approach to its effort in providing drinking water and introduced the National Drinking Water Mission (NDWM). In 1991, this was renamed as the Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission. Prior to its onset, the mission identified and quantified the extent of the problem and set out to resolve it by the end of the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

However, the mission failed to achieve the target, firstly due to the lack of funds and secondly, due to the re-emergence of problem villages.

In the early 1990s, a large number of settlements in Maharashtra continued to depend on tankers for their drinking water supply, especially during the summer. The drought during this time aggravated the situation. In 1995, the Government of Maharashtra published a white paper on the water situation in the state. This was the first paper of its kind in the country. The then Government, equated the reality of drinking water scarcity to inadequate infrastructure development and to the excessive dependence on unreliable sources. The paper stated that massive capital investments are required for developing the necessary infrastructure for fulfilling the drinking water requirements of the state. The then State Government took a decision to amend the MWSSB Act, to establish the Maharashtra *Jeevan Pradhikaran* (MJP) giving the State the authority to raise capital from the open market. With the help of the MJP and the GSDA, the Government of Maharashtra embarked on a mission to free villages from tankers. A master plan (*Brihat Aarakhada*) was prepared to achieve this objective.

With all these efforts it is estimated that in Maharashtra, since 1960, about 3,60,000 schemes for water supply were implemented spread over its 28,500 Gram Panchayats. This includes open wells, bore wells, single village schemes etc. In other words, on an average each Gram Panchayat has about 12 interventions for supply of drinking water.

The Government of India analysed the situation all over India and concluded that although a large number of villages came under such schemes each year, the number of problem villages were not reducing at the same rate. This prompted the Government of India to revise its guidelines for ARWSP in 1999. The main reasons for this are as follow-

- The fast depletion of the ground water level, which also increases the incidence of quality issues with regard to the level of Arsenic and Fluoride in the water;
- Water sources go dry and defunct due to deforestation, with the consequent reduced recharge and lack of protection;
- Heavy emphasis on new construction and poor attention to maintenance;
- The non-involvement of people in operations and maintenance; and
- The neglect of traditional water management practices.

In the case of Maharashtra as well, a thorough review of the status of water supply revealed that the approach of the Government has failed, mainly because of the negligence of infrastructure developed in the past and because of the

drying up of drinking water sources. One of the main reasons for this was the lack of people's participation in water supply schemes and the supply-driven approach of interventions.

Over the years, the efforts of the Government have led to the general perception that the Government has accepted the responsibility of providing drinking water. The revised guidelines of the ARWSP issued by GOI in 1999, paved the way for sectoral reforms, and the Government of Maharashtra agreed to implement this approach in the entire stateⁱ. The nature of reforms revolves around the following principles-

- A dynamic partnership between people and the government;
- The contribution of capital by both the partners; and
- Beneficiaries completely bear the expenses for the operation and maintenance.

These guidelines explicitly acknowledged the linkage between the quality of water and the overall health condition of the population. In other words, the provision of drinking water is mainly related to health concerns. The approach of the water sector should change from mere water supply to water management in its entirety.

The main features of the reforms approach are-

- The implementation of water supply schemes should take a process approach, especially at the village level, and the capacity building of village-level institutions is the key to the success of these reforms;
- The main role of external agencies (GO and NGO) is to build the capacities of communities and PRIs to own, operate and manage activities;
- GO and NGO functionaries should act as facilitators and not as implementing agencies;
- Women should play a central role in planning, implementation and in the operation and maintenance; and
- The community should decide the technology, service level and quantity required, based on the capacity and willingness to pay (Unlike the earlier 'norms' prescribed by the government).

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have strengthened the institutions of local self-government (Panchayati Raj Institutions). It provides a statutory platform for people's participation at the local level. These institutions are expected to take up the responsibility of planning, implementation, and operation and maintenance of the infrastructure developed to provide drinking water.

Thus over the years, the supply-driven, Central or State Government led approach of drinking water supply changed to demand-led, participatory, local government led approach. The success of this approach will depend upon the corresponding changes in the Department.

Evolution of the Sanitation Policy

Following paragraphs briefly summarises evolution of sanitation policy based on a paper presented in a Dhaka, by Government of India, during South Asian Conference on Sanitation in 2003 (GOI, 2003).

Historically, sanitation was a part of town planning, even as far back as 3000 BC. Well laid-out drainage and sanitation systems during the Indus Valley Civilization diluted over the ages, and by the 20th century, the disposal of human and animal excreta was left to nature in the rural areas. In the urban areas, sanitation was earlier limited to the disposal of human excreta by cesspools, open ditches, pit latrines, bucket system and other such means, including the inhuman practice of manually removing “nightsoil” Sanitation was not perceived as a priority, especially in the rural areas where open space was readily available until recently, in spite of the growth of population and urbanisation.

Water supply and sanitation were added to the national agenda during the country's First Five-Year Plan (1951-56). In 1954, the Government of India launched the first National Water Supply Programme as a part of the Government's Health Plan, and Sanitation was mentioned in the section on Water Supply. Until the 1980s, sanitation was often relegated to lower rungs of the priority ladder. In 1986, the Ministry of Rural Development launched India's first nationwide programme for sanitation- the Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP).

The Government of India revised the guidelines for CRSP in 1991 and 1998 to provide access to more funds for the scheme. Despite these efforts, the total sanitation coverage was approximately 16 to 20 per cent of the total rural households. The major factors contributing to low coverage were-

- The high priority accorded to the construction of latrines and the low priority given to information, education and communication (IEC);
- The promotion of a single model of sanitation i.e. the standard twin pit pour flush latrine;
- Heavy reliance on subsidies;
- Inadequate participation of beneficiaries;

- Inadequate NGO/ private sector involvement; and
- Non-involvement of community-based institutions such as youth clubs.

The deficiencies of the programme resulted in-

- The unsatisfactory progress to meet targets/ requirements;
- The inappropriate utilisation of existing assets;
- The over emphasis on hardware and targets; and
- The inadequate awareness and people's participation.

These developments led the Government of India to launch the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in 1999, advocating the shift from a high subsidy to a low subsidy regime, a greater household involvement, demand responsiveness, and providing a range of options to promote increased affordability. It also strongly emphasised on IEC and social marketing, providing for stronger back-up systems, such as trained masons and building materials through rural sanitary marts and production centres. The TSC also included a thrust on school sanitation as an entry point for encouraging the wider acceptance of sanitation by the rural masses. Thus, the new policy focussed on the dissemination of information, stimulating demand and solicited 'orders' from households for sanitary toilets.

The Government of Maharashtra has duly agreed to implement this policy and has decided to implement TSC in all its districts. In 2000-2001, the Government of Maharashtra launched an innovative programme, known as the *Sant Gadgebaba* Clean Village Sanitation Campaign, the *Rashtra Sant Tukadoji Maharaj* Clean Village Competition and the *Rashtrapita* Mahatma Gandhi Competition For Cleanest ZPs and PS. The Campaign turned out to be the biggest IEC campaign, propagating environmental sanitation, personal hygiene and health measures ever undertaken in the rural areas. This campaign led to the mobilisation of the rural population to clean their houses, neighbourhoods and the entire village without any financial support from the Government.

In conclusion, the Sanitation Policy changed from the disposal of human excreta to a comprehensive approach, encompassing personal hygiene, home sanitation, safe water, garbage disposal, excreta disposal and wastewater disposal. The implementation of the policy will be community-led and will have people-centred initiatives.

The Structure of the Water Supply and Sanitation Department

The Ground Water Survey and Development Agency (GSDA) and the Maharashtra Jeevan Pradhikaran (MJP) are the two principal wings of the Department. The GSDA is mainly an organisation of geologists, entrusted with the responsibility of overall development and management of ground water. The MJP mainly comprises engineers implementing piped water supply schemes. The Government of Maharashtra has used both these wings to achieve the goal of assured access to adequate drinking water.

Recently, the Government of Maharashtra formulated a new policy. In line with these policy changes, some of functions and functionaries of the GSDA and MJP were transferred to Zilla Parishads. The Water Supply Department of Zilla Parishads mainly comprises these transferred functionaries. Moreover, in order to facilitate the reforms process, a Reform Support and Project Management Unit (RSPMU) was set up. The RSPMU has its presence at the state and district level.

The 'Functional Review' exercise mainly focussed on understanding the functioning of various officials in the light of the new Reform Policy, to identify gaps and suggest ways for its improvement.

As a part of this exercise, the 'vision' and 'mission' of the Department was evolved, taking cognisance of earlier efforts to form such statements. This exercise was undertaken to provide a ready perspective of why the Department exists, tells us what it does, and describes how it does it. The following are the vision and mission of the Department-

Vision of the Department

"To embed in ourselves that we are a Department empowered by society to ensure the availability and accessibility of potable drinking water and sanitation services to all citizens in an environmentally and economically sustainable and equitable manner through our own efforts."

Mission of the Department

"To become a Department sensitive to the diverse water supply and sanitation needs of society and to respond to it efficiently, effectively and in a transparent way, by adhering to the principle of devolution, with Panchayati Raj institutions playing a responsible role."

Findings and Suggestions

The GSDA

As observed in the earlier chapter, under the new reform policy, GSDA is expected to work as a professional service provider. A critical examination of its working reveals that-

- The GSDA is groping for its exact role in the new Reform Policy.
- Until recently, the GSDA focussed only on the exploitation of ground water resources, and paid little or no attention towards the development and management of ground water.
- A large group of newly appointed geologists are not necessarily experienced in hydrogeology.
- The GSDA has ceased to be a technical service provider for development by villagers.
- The GSDA does not consider itself responsible for failure, neither over longer periods, nor for shorter periods.
- The persistence of the Scarcity Plan clearly shows that the GSDA has failed to understand the nature of ground water (both shallow and deep aquifers) and suggest sustainable measures for its management.
- The existing practices of outsourcing are fictitious, as there is no real competition, with GSDA receiving 100 per cent subsidies.
- The prevailing culture within the organisation is highly hierarchical and lacks a culture of innovation; the organisation has become stagnant.
- The new policy has curtailed the number of functions carried out by the GSDA and has transferred some of its staff to Zilla Parishad; the remaining structure of the GSDA is top-heavy, with too many supervisors looking over the shoulders of a few ground workers, without providing any visionary leadership.
- The GSDA lacks leadership that has a scientific bent of mind and an understanding of the envisaged role under the new policy.
- The GSDA potentially has a core competency in geological data collection, analysis and can evolve “knowledge products” for various end users.

Based on these findings, certain core functions and activities can be identified for the GSDA. The following section summarises the core functions of the GSDA, the products and services that it can offer, the probable clients it can approach and the key conditions necessary for the effective delivery of the identified functions.

A geologist with scientific bent of mind and a clear understanding of the envisaged role of the organisation should head the organisation. The current practice of an administrator heading the organisation should come to a stop.

A governing body, comprising experienced and interested individuals should assist the Director. Such a body should include representatives of users (both urban and rural), academicians, and experts from the Geological Survey of India and the Central Ground Water Board. Such a governing body should have the power to formulate an annual plan of the organisation, and should have the powers to review the progress of work, as well as the performance of its personnel.

The core function of the GSDA should be to provide planning inputs to various decision-making bodies, including the State Government and various PIAs. In other words, the GSDA should analyse data related to ground water to come up with lucid and user-friendly tools that would help decision makers to take rational decisions. The following is the list of some of the tools that the GSDA should prepare-

- A three-dimensional map of a specific area;
- Area specific analysis of the existing utilisation of water resources and their budget;
- An analysis of ground-water pollution and suggestions to ameliorate it;
- Technical information and reports necessary for the implementation of the Ground Water Regulation Act; and
- Establish aquifer parameters such as geometry, quantity, chemical composition, permeability, safe limit of exploitation etc. along with the necessary control measures to ensure the sustainability of these aquifers.

It is clear that the Government will remain the main client for the GSDA, especially for its planning inputs. There is a need to encourage these decision-making institutions to demand services from the GSDA. The GSDA should also find other funding sources like the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to develop such planning tools on its own. The Government of Maharashtra can think of establishing its own Science and Technology Cell to promote similar technically driven initiatives.

It is interesting to observe that the Mining Officer of the Department of Mining is in no way involved in the exploitation of minerals, but looks after the “returns” of production, royalty, rent payment etc. The District (ZP) should have a geological cell to cater to ground water, as well as mining issues. The GSDA should work as a service provider and compete for functions such as source identification, yield

certification, PIA (Project Implementing Agency) functions for the implementation of watershed development programmes etc. It is clear that the client has the final choice of choosing its service provider. There should be adequate room for outsourcing these activities, with geologists from the ZP undertaking a monitoring role on behalf of the ZP. The process should be fair, giving equal chance to all private service providers, in terms of costs and resources.

The existing pool of geologists with the GSDA require to upgrade their geological skills, orientation towards their role and deliverables under the new Reform Policy, and understanding the planning needs and expectations of various decision-making bodies.

It is obvious that the GSDA requires structural changes to achieve the above objectives with fewer supervisors. The organisation also needs to inculcate the spirit of innovation, giving room for free scientific discussion amongst its functionaries.

The MJP

The MJP is expected to work as a professional technical service provider competing with other service providers. A critical analysis of the organisation shows that-

- The higher ranks of the government are aware of the malfunctioning within the MJP. However, they have not initiated sustained measures to improve the same it's functioning. There seems to be a conscious negligence towards this.
- The root of malfunctioning lies in the concentration of all functions with one organisation. Traditionally, the MJP carried out the assessment of needs, designing, planning and estimation, technical sanctioning of a planned project, monitoring and implementation, and in select cases the operation and maintenance. This convergence of all aspects of water supply project with one authority has led to the flawed functioning of the organisation.
- The need for restructuring and radical changes in the business procedures is acknowledged at the higher ranks of the Government, as well as within the MJP; however, perceptions regarding the envisaged change vary. The MJP has taken certain initiatives for the same, including the transfer of functions and functionaries to Zilla Parishads. The remainder of the MJP organisation is looking for enabling instructions, clearly defining their roles, responsibilities and deliverables for the future.
- There is a great deal of scepticism among MJP functionaries regarding the new policy, and these functionaries are hoping for a reversal of policy. The

reform approach adhered to at the policy level, has neither reached in letter nor in spirit at the lower rungs of the MJP. The reluctance to change, imbibe new skills and adhere to new attitudes accompanies the negative attitude of these functionaries.

- MJP functionaries have the technical ability to design, implement, operate and maintain water supply and sanitation infrastructure. Local bodies, representing clients, need to take a more responsible role in the water supply and sanitation sector and should engage service providers to ensure efficient and effective services. The MJP has a potential to become a competing service provider.
- In some cases, the MJP works as a monitor and a technical sanction authority. However, there is a need to devolve this function to the concerned Zilla Parishads.

In the light of the above, the following steps are necessary in order to transform the working of the MJP-

- The function of the MJP as a facilitator in mobilising financial resources should come to an end. There is a need to build the capacities of local bodies and to encourage them to raise their own resources. Steps to achieve this will include- inculcating the principles of financial discipline and sound procedures, initiating credit ratings to local bodies based on the assessment of their performance and existing financial condition, strengthening of financial institutions that extend credit to these local bodies etc.
- The system of the convergence of all functions with the MJP should come to an end. The table below suggests institutions that could probably take up various functions involved in the implementation of a water supply project-

Agencies which could take on the Responsibility of Certain Functions of the Department	
Need Assessment	Devolve PRIs with responsibility of sharing of the cost of meeting this perceived need. They can mobilise water supply department with the ZP to verify such articulated need.
Designing, Preparation of Plan and	Outsource

Estimate	PRIs can engage private service providers. ZP can engage its water supply department to for financial and technical scrutiny. (MJP can compete for such requirements)
Technical and Administrative Sanctioning	Devolve The sole responsibility of this should be with PRIs irrespective of the cost and nature of a project. Sanctioning authority should be different from the planning/ designing agency.
Implementation	Outsource Private service providers identified by PRIs.
Monitoring during Implementation	Devolve PRIs with technical assistance from water supply department of the ZP
Operation and Maintenance	Devolve The decision and responsibility lies entirely with PRIs. PRIs can outsource this activity to private service providers.

- The MJP should discontinue the issuing of technical sanctions for certain schemes costing more than a stipulated amount. It should not work as an instrument of the Government of Maharashtra (or that of the Government of India) to monitor its investments in the sector. The ZP Water Supply Department could take up this responsibility. In other words, the MJP should work only as a professional and competitive service provider.
- The MJP Division office should work as a strategic business unit with its own business plan and targets. Targets for the business plan should be financially viable and self-sufficient. Such strategic business units should compete for work with other service providers.
- The overall vision, mission and objective of the MJP should guide individual strategic business units to formulate its business plans and processes. other changes should accompany this change, such as the autonomy in appointments and dismissals, profit sharing etc.
- The Circle-level offices should also be made autonomous and should work as a co-ordinating company with an appropriate contract with division-level companies. It can look at other services such as capacity-building, consultancy etc.

The above can be implemented in a phased manner, along with the necessary capacity building support. Such autonomous units should also be supported with necessary seed-capital. The training centre at Nashik can play an important role in capacity building, during the transition phase and later MJP should orient itself to become autonomous.

Until now, the MJP almost had monopoly in the water supply sector; there are very few private service providers. There is a need to take deliberate steps towards vendor development. At the same time, local bodies need to be empowered to undertake such tendering and outsourcing. In the light of the above radical structural change, the Board serves no purpose and should be dissolved.

The new policy has created room to distinguish various actors performing different functions. In other words, the new policy encourages the clear identification of distinct regulators, monitors and implementers. The role of the MJP is therefore more of a professional service provider extending implementation services on its own, for it has the ability to do so and there are few other such service providers. However, its function as an implementer/technical service provider should be independent, while the monitoring and regulation should be carried out by another independent body.

It is clear that the regulator is expected to play a pivotal role in all water supply programmes. As mentioned earlier, regulators are nothing but various bodies of governance, in both rural and urban areas. Until now, these bodies have not undertaken such a function and have remained at the receiving end with little scope for deliberation. These bodies clearly need support and advice to enable them to achieve the envisaged role. Thus, there is a need for an institution that can extend these capacity building services to local bodies. Moreover, MJP functionaries also need capacity building programmes to understand and take up their new functions. The MJP has established a research and training centre at Nashik and this centre can be encouraged to take up the role of capacity builder in competition with other similar service providers.

The Zilla Parishad Water Supply Department

Functionaries at the district level play a crucial role, and the success of the new policy depends largely on how these functionaries respond to their practices in tune with the new policy. The following are the observations based on the current functioning of the Department.

The officials transferred from the MJP form the Water Supply Department of a majority of the Zilla Parishads. They carry with them the culture of working in a “technical line department” and are not oriented to work in a highly politicised atmosphere of a Zilla Parishad.

The ZP is responsible for the implementation of several programmes, with three main funding lines- (a) the State Government (new *Mahajal* Programme); (b) the Government of India (*Swajaldhara* Programme); and (c) externally aided programmes (*Jalswarajya* and *Aaple pani*). Some other funding sources such as the MP/ MLA Fund (MPLAD Fund), the Finance Commission, ZP resources also facilitate the implementation of water supply projects.

All these programmes follow the same policy, based on the devolution and participation; however, different programmes assign varied importance to “hard” (construction) and “soft” (capacity building) components.

The implementation mechanism of these programmes often does not coincide with the changes at the policy level. In summary, -

- Officials of the ZP Water Supply Department act as the main knowledge link;
- They play an important role in the selection of the village under a programme;
- They prepare a plan and cost estimations;
- They facilitate the implementation of the scheme by organising various documents and often selecting a contractor;
- They work as a technical advisor; and
- They play an important role in the disbursement of funds.

The field study showed that grassroot-level officials and district-level officials are busy implementing “letters” of the Reform Policy and are neither equipped nor supported in the implementation of the “spirit” of the same. Moreover, they do not desire to implement the “spirit” and reluctantly implement the “letters”.

Further, three typologies emerge by which the schemes get implemented-

- (a.) The community takes the lead, with or without the help of the government programme; implements, operates, and maintains a scheme on its own;
- (b.) The community genuinely needs some intervention, but is unable to organise itself; a government official takes the lead and implements a scheme adhering to the requisites of a programme; and
- (c.) A nexus between government officials, politician and contractors results in the implementation of a scheme.

The success of the Reform Policy depends on ability of the community to take efficient, effective and transparent decisions. The implementation of reforms needs a process approach, and the process needs to be facilitated with a strong knowledge link and technical support. The ZP is responsible for financially unsustainable infrastructure implemented under the earlier policy for water supply, mostly in the form of RR schemes.

Based on these findings, the following suggestions emerge-

- ❖ There is a need to bring uniformity in all programmes implemented by the ZP Water Supply Department. This has been achieved to some extent with the newly introduced *Mahajal* Programme. However, different programmes assign varied importance to “soft” support and to the implementation processes of the new policy. There is a need to bring in uniformity in this respect.
- ❖ A critical look at the current practices in the implementation of various programmes brings forth the convergence of various functions with Zilla Parishad functionaries. These functionaries act as the knowledge link, the selector of villages, as technical designers, as technical sanctioning authority and as monitors. ZP functionaries should not work as an agency designing a project; it should be outsourced. In principle, the technical sanctioning authority should be independent of the technical designing agency. At present, ZP functionaries themselves design a project (either directly or under the garb of a private service provider with different name) and also extend technical sanction to the project.
- ❖ The ZP Water Supply Department should work as monitors providing professional advice and feedback to decision-making bodies. It should provide its inputs at the approval stage (irrespective of the cost of the project) and should extend its support in technically monitoring the progress of a project to the concerned PRI promoting a project.
- ❖ There is a need to orient ZP functionaries to understand the ‘spirit’ of reforms and there also is a need to build capacities of these functionaries to take up new responsibilities. There is also a need to revisit existing working procedures.
- ❖ The implementation of the new policy demands attitudinal changes from all stakeholders including the people at large, political representatives and government functionaries. Keeping this in mind, there is a need to modify the

existing project implementation process under various programmes. The following describes the ideal implementation process.

Phase I: Preparation of Project Proposal

A village aspiring for some kind of intervention for drinking water supply should engage an agency to prepare a project proposal. The village should invest its own resources for this activity and a part of it could be eligible for reimbursement. The project proposal should take care of the technical engineering as well as the social engineering. Engineers who prepare a plan should be aware of the context of the village and decision-making process and social dynamics of the village. Based on this understanding, the agency should evolve a technical option in consultation with the villagers. The proposal should also include the proposed strategy for the operation and maintenance of the water supply system, for the monitoring system during implementation and for the capacity building of villagers at large. The Gram Panchayat should submit such a proposal to the Zilla Parishad.

Phase II: Approval

A Committee at the district-level comprising ZP engineers, accountants, the ZP President and CEO should study the project proposal and should extend-

- Technical sanction
- Budget scrutiny- to ensure the rates quoted in the proposal are appropriate.
- Financial approval- to ensure that the project can be implemented in the given time period; this approval should either be disconnected from the financial year cycle or should be valid for at least more that six months.

Phase III: Capacity Building

Once a project receives the above sanctions, the village should take the initiative to build its own capacities to enable the implementation of the scheme, and the operation and maintenance upon its completion. This should include training programmes in technical, accounts and other related topics. Thus, the aspirant village itself should create a demand for training to build its capacities. Institutions like the NRTC or other approved institutions can extend these training modules. A part of this phase should focus on the dissemination of information and on the collection of popular contributions.

Phase IV: Verification and Administrative Sanction

A Committee comprising the Gram Panchayat members of neighbouring villages and Panchayat Samiti members representing the village at the block level should verify activities of the capacity-building phase. The Committee should ensure that

the decision-making process related to the project is as per the spirit of the new Reform Policy. Taking cognisance of this verification report, a Committee comprising members of the District Water Supply and Water Conservation Committee and the CEO should extend administrative sanction to the project.

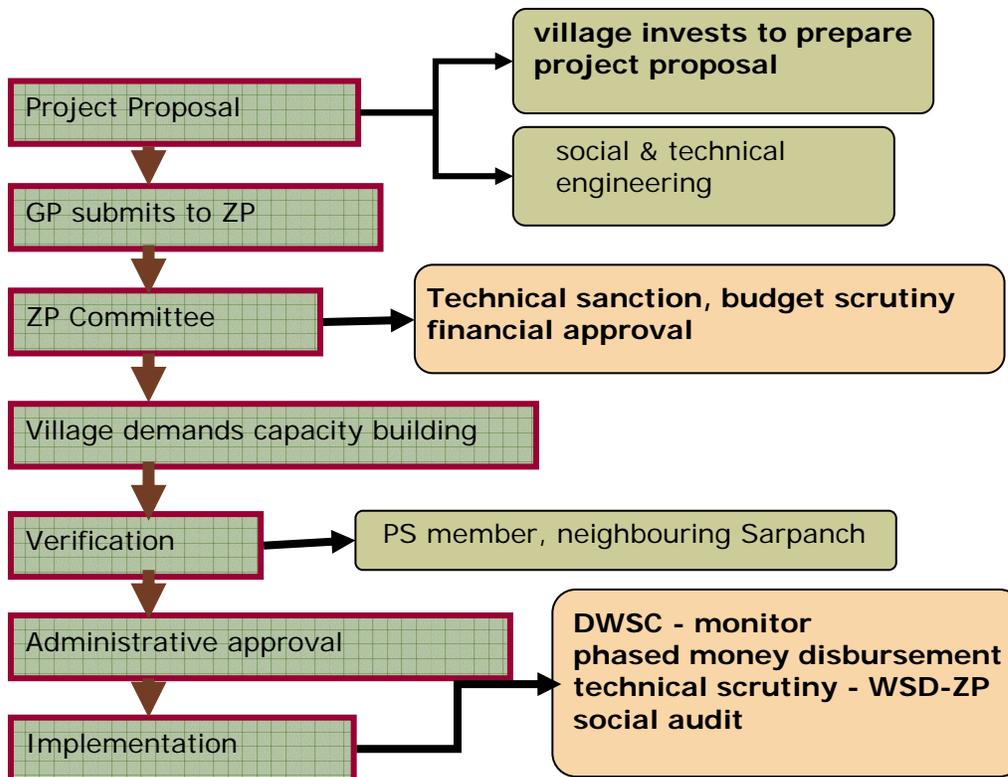
Phase V: Implementation

The District Water Supply and Sanitation Committee should monitor the implementation of the project. The District Committee should include ZP representatives of the project area. Funds should be released in three instalments. The first instalment should be released along with the administrative sanction to the VWSC account. Verification report and report for technical scrutiny should be attached with the demand for the second instalment. VWSC members should extend the verification report, whereas ZP engineers should extend the technical scrutiny report. The District Committee should take cognisance of these reports prior to the release of the second instalment. A similar process can release the final instalment, in addition to the verification of the O and M contract mentioned below.

Phase VI: O and M Contract

The final instalment should be released only after the verification of satisfactory O and M arrangements and contracts.

Following chart briefly summarises the proposed process.



The RSPMU

There is a lot of scepticism amongst government functionaries in the water supply sector. The successful implementation of the new policy therefore needs deliberate efforts to create an enabling environment for reforms and for extending troubleshooting support wherever necessary. The RSPMU, along with the Advisory Committee is expected to provide an enabling environment and to resolve conflicts. Some of the observations in this regard are as follows-

- The Advisory Committee is defunct and rarely meets.
- RSPMU has made its presence felt at the state-level and in every district. The unit comprises experts in identified fields and a few government functionaries on deputation, both at the state and district levels. The experts are hired on a temporary basis and they undergo a short training programme once they start working under the programme. However, the ability and quality of these experts is often inadequate to extend the expected role in the implementation of the Reform Policy.
- The implementation process of externally aided programmes (*Jalswarajya*, *Aaple Pani* and TSC) involves the formation of certain district-level teams and capacity-building support systems.
- *Aaple Pani* supports the District Project Monitoring Unit (DPMU), while *Jalswarajya* supports the District Facilitating Team (DFT), the District Administration and Management Team (DAMT) and the District Financial Management Team (DFMT).

- Capacity building was initiated with considerable delay during the implementation of these programmes. This has led to certain deviations from the spirit of reforms.
- There exists a lot of scepticism about these programmes amongst other functionaries in the sector.
- Further, as it is an experiment, several queries arise during its implementation at all levels of decision-making. Prompt response and sorting out of these queries is of prime importance to the speed of the implementation of various projects and on the overall morale of the implementation team.
- The present system mainly focuses on the monitoring of the outcome function rather than providing an enabling environment for the implementation of reforms. This has jeopardised the implementation of reforms and has given room for scepticism and criticism. The continuation of such a top-heavy 'inspecting' organisation will result in an inbuilt system of failure.

All stakeholders should understand that these programmes provide the opportunity to prepare for the implementation of the new Reform Policy. The RSPMU will eventually withdraw and functionaries at the district-level will be expected to work towards the implementation of the reform policy. These programmes are empowering tools to help government functionaries in the transition towards the successful implementation of new policy. This is an opportunity to observe, learn, upgrade skills, imbibe new knowledge and develop sensitivities necessary for the implementation of reforms.

In the light of the above, the following suggestions are made-

- ❖ The Advisory Committee at the state-level should meet regularly, to discuss the implementation of reforms, and suggesting changes wherever necessary. The current Committee can be downsized to a few interested members, capable of extending rational advice.
- ❖ The current functioning of the RSPMU is limited to the inspection of the implementation of a few projects. In this light, it has become top-heavy with many inspecting a few functionaries. There is a need to downsize this organisation.
- ❖ The RSPMU is falling short of its mandate to support the reforms and to create an enabling environment to implement the same. Further, many of its functionaries are not aware or are not equipped with extending such services. A strong motivated staff with appropriate skill sets can only deliver the expected. There is a need for its leadership to clearly identify their role and ensure the capacity building of its functionaries.

- ❖ The RSPMU should help implement the above process and extend its support wherever necessary. This may include vendor development, accreditation of various service providers to ensure the quality of service provided.

¹ In Dhule, Jalgaon, Nanded and Raigad districts the sector reform process was initiated under sector reform pilot project and are now implementing GOI sponsored '*Swajaldhara*' programme. Pune, Ahmadnagar and Aurangabad are implementing KfW supported '*Aapale Pani*' programme. Other districts will implement '*Jalaswarajya*' programme in two phases. The first phase will be spread over 2003 to 2009 and will cover districts Thane, Nasik, Satara, Sangli, Osmanabad, Buldhana, Yavatmal, Nagpur and Chandrapur. The second phase will be spread over 2006 to 2012 and will cover districts Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Solapur, Nandurbar, Jalgaon, Jalana, Beed, Parbhani, Latur, Hingoli, Vashim, Akola, Wardha, Bhandara, Gondiya and Gadchiroli. The commencement of second phase will depend on success of first phase.