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Assessment of the Capacities of Community Based Organisations for Sustainable Management of Small Town Water Supply Scheme

Report submitted to the University of Moratuwa in partial fulfilment of requirements for the Degree of Masters of Engineering in Environmental Engineering & Management 1995/1996



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DECLARATION

This thesis has not been previously presented in whole or part to any University or Institute for a Higher degree.

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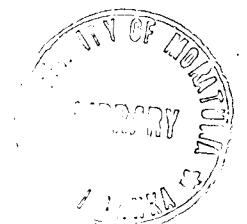
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ABSTRACT

Poor water supply & sanitation services continue to be critical problems in rural areas despite considerable effort to improve and expand coverage. Mounting evidence indicates that centrally managed schemes, are difficult to implement and operate when the communities served are dispersed, remote and relatively small. Application of sophisticated technology in such systems leads to high cost in implementation and management that are unaffordable to manage. High O&M and management costs need to be covered by charging high tariffs. Beside above there is a lack of financial resources and physical and social infrastructure needed to support development or to maintain new systems. In contrast, locally managed systems appear to function reasonably well at affordable prices and looks to be sustainable. Although such schemes are obviously difficult to standardize for all communities due to the unique nature of each case, water & sanitation experts agree that they have numerous advantages over other approaches and that the question is no longer whether community management should be promoted, but how it should be done.

In the study, attention was focused towards the sustainability of the provided water supply and sanitation facilities. To sustain the facilities over a long period of time capacities of managing agencies should have acceptable standards. The main component of the study was assessing the capacities of the Community Based Organizations that are vested with power and authority in the management of rural water supply schemes covering the small town category. Study was carried out by observing the situations of six locations where small town water supply schemes have been constructed. Some of these schemes are managed by the local authorities and some by the implementing agencies like NWSDB. NWSDB and local Authorities are powerful legal entities with an established institutional strength recognized by the legislature and the society. However the conditions of CBOs are not that fascinating. Therefore capacity assessment was made focusing the CBOs to a greater extent and the achievements of CBOs were compared against the outputs and performance of NWSDB & LA set up as well.

The six small town schemes studied are diverse in the form of technology adapted, and the nature of management. Therefore, thought had to be extended to various aspects representing these special features while carrying out the assessment. Since all the schemes are planned, implemented and managed with effective involvement of the users in the demand driven environment under the participatory background, the research study was also executed in participatory basis.

Study was carried out by conducting interviews with user communities, obtaining data by distributing a questionnaire, making observations by participating in community meetings and monitoring and evaluating the performance of CBOs by interacting with the communities in progress meetings, during the implementation stage of the project.

Data gathered from the collected information were analysed to study the aspects given in the objective of the research. Findings of the study were presented comparing the outputs of different maintaining agencies of water supply schemes such as CBOs, LAs and NWSDB. Inputs from district sociologists were obtained when social aspects of water were addressed.

This thesis describes the out come of a study carried out to assess the Capacities of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in various aspects of user centred water supply schemes, taking six small town schemes as case studies as described above.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	-	Community Based Organization
CWSSP	-	Community Water Supply & Sanitation Project
CWSPU	-	Community Water Supply & Sanitation Project Unit
DDP	-	District Development Plan
DS	-	Divisional Secretary
GI	-	Galvanized Iron
GOSL	-	Government of Sri Lanka
HRD	-	Human Resource Development
IDA	-	International Development Agency (World Bank)
LA	-	Local Authority
m ³	-	Cubic Meter
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organization
NRW	-	Non Revenue Water
NWSDB	-	National Water Supply & Drainage Board
O&M	-	Operation & Maintenance
OJT	-	On the Job Training
PO	-	Partner Organization
PS	-	Pradeshiya Shbha
PSP	-	Private Sector Participation
PVC	-	Polyvinyl Chloride
RWS	-	Rural Water Supply
SO	-	Support Organization
DCC	-	District Co-ordination Committee

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