



## Responsibility, choices and community management in Nepal



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NEPAL IS A small country in the South Asian Region. Its 70 per cent of the land is covered by mountains. The problems of lack of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, limited access to health facilities, hygiene education and literacy have considerable effect to health specially to women in Nepal. Many INGOs, GOs, NGOs, LINGOs are working in these fields since 1970. Lessons learnt from past history, most of the sector organisations are in process to change or have changed their working approach from donor to community driven approach. Among them, GWS is also one.

### Lesson learnt from past history of Rural Drinking Water Programme (1970-1990)

Although the donor's contribution in rural water supply is significant and satisfactory with community participation but poor water supply and sanitation services continue to be critical problems in rural Nepal. Lesson learnt from past history are as follows:

#### Drawbacks assessed in Programme Implementation from Agency's side

##### Technical aspects

- inability to develop water schemes on a demand driven approach
- disregard to users performance (skill)
- costly project design, poor supervision of construction
- inadequate arrangement for Operation and Maintenance in the total scheme plan
- Monitor of O and M of rural water supply paid less attention compared to design and construction
- technical know-how not transferred to the beneficiaries
- lack of respect to local talent/ideas and technology.

##### Social aspects

- meaning of community participation wrongly interpreted by development workers
- Agency's role seen as the provider/spoonfeeding
- community's willingness to pay not understood
- active participation not encouraged from very beginning of planning stage
- attention not paid on real users involvement (who are the main victim of the D/W problems)
- "You don't know, I know attitude" by the agency staff.
- attention not paid on community's capabilities/resources/mobilization and management capacities.
- Programme/budget transparency not maintained

#### Draw-backs form community side

- no involvement of all users in decision making process from different group
- lack of commitment
- low self esteem
- inactive committee, more committees, lacks appropriate member in the committee and unaware of their role and responsibilities
- lack of skill and knowledge on HSE
- inability to find out technical options, confidence decreased
- lack of ownership and dependency syndrome
- no control of the system
- no women involvement in decision making process
- meaning of community participation misunderstood.

#### Lesson learnt from women's involvement in drinking water programme

- In D/W programme women can not build the whole D/W system. They need support from men too.
- When focusing more on women, men think that it is only women's programme and start to ignore it. This increases more burden on women. They need appropriate environmental and moral support from male community.

#### All these drawbacks end on the main points of improvement on

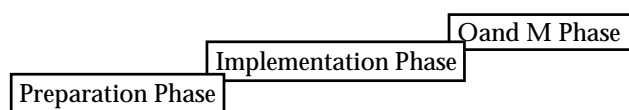
- full community approach (people centered approach)
- real users involvement in decision making process from very beginning of planning stage
- support Community's self esteem/capabilities
- encourage active participation from all users of different group in each and every step of the programme
- make understand the meaning of Participation to community as well as to project staff.

Towards Participatory Community Approach in Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Programme and to meet the above lessons learnt, since 90s, different agencies and GO/NGOs are working in partnership approach following the principles as follows:

- Partnership
- Participation
- Local available resource mobilization
- Gender equality
- Transparency

Social Justice  
Sustainability

The Eighth Plan (1992-1997) of National Planning Commission of Nepal emphasized on community participation, sustainability, cost recovery, decentralization, NGO and private sector involvement to achieve the target to provide safe DW facilities by 2000 AD and to provide basic knowledge of sanitation and sanitary facilities to the maximum number of people along with environmental sanitation. Since 1990s onwards, the sectorial organisations introduced participatory tools in their projects to enhance community participation. For programme as well as project sustainability a gender approach also seeks to prevent further over burdening of women, increase women's decision making capabilities, empower them to achieve a more equal and just situation with reference to their workload. This implies the need to address men also, since men are required to change their attitude and behaviour to support this. Stages have been developed to facilitate community for gender awareness and gender equality in their D/W system to improve sanitary conditions and build up community confidence. Programme implementation has been changed into stepwise approach with phase-wise development process as follows:



### Participatory tools in phase-wise development process of rural drinking water and sanitation programme

The types of tools used in different phases to achieve partnership approach are as follows:

#### Aim of the tools

- community confidence and ownership build up
- women's active participation in decision making process
- sustainable drinking water scheme.

#### Objective of the tools

- Encourage interest of community towards participation with gender involvement
- Enhance community confidence for their own projects by identifying their need
- Support community management system
- Enhance ownership feeling.

#### Participatory tools used in initial phase for need assessment

- Introduction to Project Information Leaflet and programme policy
- Ist Community Resource Map
- Population Census
- Defecation Practice identification

- Water Use Practices and data analysis
- Village development history
- Proposed water source identification and spring flow measurement.

#### Participatory tools used in preparation phase for awareness creation, planning enhancement of community management

- Bees and Lion in Water and Sanitation Management Committee
- Selection criteria development by the community themselves
- O and M Fund in Bank account
- Community action plan for preparation
- IInd Community Resource Map for community's predesign of scheme lay out
- (Number of standpost in predesign, detail survey and construction)
- Community choice for RT/BPT/TS etc
- Hygiene Message Tile - community choice
- Community contribution form - community's proposal and motivation
- Spider's network and collective approach game.

#### For awareness creation and enhancement of hygiene improvement and management

- Importance of latrine
- Diseases transmission routes
- Latrine design and resource identification
- Latrine, Superstructure and resource mobilization
- 'Tika - Table for Latrine construction Progress Monitoring
- Latrine in use, good O and M with Flash cards
- Priority ranking by CHW for their own village sanitary improvement
- Fact case-studies of success/failure of community efforts in the context of community management
- Distribution of Micro Software Guidelines.

#### Tools used in implementation phase for pre-construction planning, management, construction monitoring

- Community project construction action plan and management
- Scheme lay - out and work distribution plan and management
- Community workplan on labour contribution and management (Men, Women and Children )
- Commissioning and Opening ceremony - analysis of community and agency's contribution and forecast of actual scheme cost.

#### Tools used in operation and maintenance phase

- Project Monitoring - Use of selected Tools according to requirements
- Project Evaluation - Use of previous Tools used in Initial visit and preparation phase

## Practical lesson learnt from participatory tools applied for partnership approach

### Participation - in initial phase

- Project Information Leaflet is a starting point of discussion with community about project policy and philosophy. It helps the community to understand about what it means by participation, partnership, local available resources and its mobilization. It facilitates the community to realize why both sexes attendance is important in the meeting and decision making process. It reminds the community the past history of drinking water system, reasons of its failure and the importance of real user involvement in the project planning and implementation cycles.
- Lesson learnt- Community tries to understand the change in project policy and philosophy, its cause and effects on the community.
- About Need Assessment Tools- Community finds interesting to give/receive information in new technique. This interest encourages them for active participation. Separate Community Resource Map, done by women, encourages them to talk about their sources, their interest behind proposed water sources, the difficulties they are facing at present and the status of their present D/W sources. Project found both sexes interested to show their water points, proposed sources and purpose of applying for the D/W support. It facilitates community for common action, common decision and women's participation towards mutual understanding.
- Vote for Water Sources and its Use- The tool encourages the women to speak about the purpose of D/W support and their present management for water need.
- Vote for Defecation Practice- It is found that the tool is quite interesting for staff as well as to the community. They find this tool a media for them to build up rapport with the community with ease. The process of voting enable to create an environment of fun and joy and encourage community motivations.
- Lesson Learnt: It is the motivating tool which attracts both gender participation for further meetings or gatherings, listen and practice for active participation.

### Participation — in preparation phase

Community understands that the tools are to express their views, feelings, priority ranking and to plan for common decisions and collective efforts e.g selection of Water Sanitation and Management Committee (WSMC) members based on animal/insect character cards. Such activities increase the number of attendance for future meetings and more minuting and decisions are made.

### Community responsibility generation

Community learns to identify and prioritize potential sources and reason for prioritization. Community takes initiation and effort of source agreement when it lies in other's

property. They take the task of source yield measurement regularly and record it. They understand its importance. Taking decisions on amount of Operation and Maintenance Fund to be collected and deposit it in the bank are the example towards their feeling responsibility and work sincerity. Their contribution for household latrine construction and progress monitoring and during construction providing store in the village and transportation of material are other examples of generation of responsibility feeling. The opening celebrations, prize distribution to those households who contributed more labour participation are the fact example of community responsibility and ownership feeling. That is why after construction, the community say proudly 'This water scheme is ours'.

### Choices and community management

Project pays attention on community choice e.g source prioritization, Now the community identifies their requirements and allocate the standposts. Women get chance to locate their standposts where they feel suitable. Community gives the number of standposts in their IInd Community Resource Map and scheme pre-design. This number is followed in detailed survey and in construction too. Community has the preference to select the hygiene message tile for their standposts according to their religion and customary practices. They normally select the tile of Nag, (the protector and god of water source) for their intake, reservoir tank and God Buddha, Shiva for standposts.

*During monitoring after construction the findings were*

- community is able to maintain the cleanliness of the standposts. They use the tile as an indicator for their hygiene management
- in the same way they use Nag to protect their intake from outside effect i.e pollution and damage.

Project gives option to select the type of reservoir tank (Stone masonry, Ferro cement and PE tank) The purpose is to give choices to community and match the choices with their locally available resources and mentally prepare for contribution.

*The findings were*

- Community make choices but when they realize that their locally available resources and their inability to manage, they cancelled their choice and made another selection.
- Community make choices when they realize their locally available resources and their inability to manage, they do not change their choice but identifies another option for their resources management
- Similarly the Community Contribution Form is one of the tool which helps to build up community confidence, mental preparation for contribution and proposal for agency's support. It is an example of community choice and empowerment. These are the small efforts made for

the enhancement of community responsibility, choices and community management through Participatory Tools in a small country like Nepal

### **Conclusion**

Users of this tool require a lot of commitment, devotion and motivation. Project experience shows that if the participatory tools are well introduced by the project staff and well

understood by the community then there will be no doubt that the tools are the seed to bloom the sense of community ownership and long term sustainability of water and sanitation programme as a whole.

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