

Kholadiyad - Inspiring Example

Background

Kholadiyad is a medium-sized village of the Vadhwani taluka of Surendranagar district. According to the 2001 census, the population of the 405 households in the village is 2033. There are ten communities - Nadoda, Patel, Koli, Harijan, Rabari, Bhangi, Brahmin, Suthar, Valand and Sathwara and agriculture is the primary occupation. Situated 16 kms away from Surendranagar, Kholadiyad was one of the villages severely hit by the earthquake in 2001. Reforms in the drinking water sector were initiated in Kholadiyad in September 2005 when the village was taken under the Earthquake rehabilitation and reconstruction project for creating community managed in-village drinking water supply systems. Prayas was the Implementing Support Agency (ISA). In spite of being a late entrant in the programme, the community showed enthusiasm and swiftness in implementation. As a result work on all the components was completed in just one year although the expected project cycle in the ERR programme is of 18 months.

Within two months of introduction of the project, the Pani Samiti formation, PRA, Village Action Plan etc. were completed. Pani Samiti was created in Gramsabha giving representation to all communities, class and families and it was the collective responsibility of all the representatives to gather the public contribution amounting to Rs.1.40 lakhs. Work execution was started by Pani Samiti within a week after sanction and the execution of the village action plan was completed within a year.

Water supply and sanitation components

The village has constructed through Pani Samiti one elevated storage reservoir of 1,00,000 litres capacity, one sump for storage of 1,00,000 litres capacity, two washing ghats, a rooftop rain water harvesting structure of 30,000 litres capacity in the school, one stand post, one cattle trough, one sanitation unit in Anganwadi and one community drinking water point. In addition one village well was repaired. Initially, WASMO had denied creation of sanitation facilities in the Anganwadi as it was almost in ruins. But the villagers were so keen on having the facilities that they first renovated the Anganwadi on their own after which sanitation facilities too were created. All the construction activities were done by Pani Samiti. The village had 146 household connections before implementation of the programme which increased to 328 when the programme was completed.

Community contribution

The total cost of creation of these facilities came to Rs. 13,30,000 and the village gave Rs.1,35,750 as 10 per cent community contribution. The village decided to fix differential rates for contribution taking into account the paying capacity of the households. Accordingly, socially and economically backward community households paid Rs. 250 per household, middle income group households paid Rs. 500 each and the economically better off households paid Rs. 1000 per household. As the public contribution was found difficult during the programme, messages by Pani Samiti using the photographs of ongoing works, appeals etc. were sent through local cable network, in order to generate confidence and faith among the community.

Capacity building

During the course of the project the villagers and Pani Samiti members were trained on various aspects of project implementation, such as work organization, construction management and supervision, post-project O&M and water quality testing etc. IEC and awareness generation activities like street-plays and lokdayras (a folk-form popular to the region) were organized to generate interest and understanding on various themes. To encourage good hygiene practices among children, competitions and activities were carried out in schools. Six exposure visits were organized through which Pani Samiti members and village leaders (in all 33 participants) got the opportunity to see the work in other villages and interact with diverse communities. Gram Sabhas and Pani Samiti meetings were held regularly to deliberate and take decisions. In all 15 Gram Sabhas (7 formal and 8 informal) and 19 Pani Samiti meetings were held within one year, which facilitated timely decision-making and was instrumental in rapid implementation of the work.

Nirmal Gram Puraskar

In the post implementation phase 244 individual toilets and 365 soak-pits were made. Individual toilet construction was partly supported by WASMO and other agencies. The village rigorously took up sanitation activities and procured 40 dustbins from Rotary Club. The efforts bore fruits and this year Kholadiyad won the Nirmal Gram Award with Rs. 2,00,000.

Sustainability

The Pani Samiti collects Rs. 130 per household per annum as water tariff out of which Rs. 30 is tax for sanitation. Last year the village could achieve 100% tariff collection. The O&M collection is Rs. 41,990 at present.

Increasing demand

Inspired by the success of the programme the community has demanded pond repairs. As the pond is used for dual purpose i.e. irrigation and drinking water, WASMO has agreed to help conditionally. The condition is to retain water for drinking purpose and that the village should have a formal regulation to prevent over-withdrawal for irrigation. Moving ahead, the village now has initiated a dialogue for having an underground drainage system to have a long-term solution for waster water disposal. The community is willing to bring in 10 per cent of genuine public contribution, although it is likely to be a huge amount.

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Spreading the message of water and sanitation

The aware and committed Pani Samiti is keen to spread the message of community management for water supply and sanitation. The Pani Samiti with the help of WASMO organized a one day workshop on 22 March, 2007 to celebrate the World Water Day. Pani Samiti facilitated the night stay of 150 Padyatries on 21 March who were on Pani Padyatra during the week. It also organised and managed on its own an awareness generation workshop for 800 participants and arranged for well known personalities in the Gujarat water sector like Shri Mathurbhai Savani, Shri Shamjibhai Aatala and Shri Biplavbhai Paul as resource persons. Once a village which was in need of exposure visits, Kholadiyad is today and example for other villages to take inspiration from.