

Tour Report of K Mazumdar, Deputy Adviser, regarding visit to Nagaland during 28-31, July 2008

During my visit to Nagaland I have visited Sechuma village in Kohima district and Thahekhu village in Dimapur district.

(I) Visit to Sechuma village in Kohima district

During the visit to Nagaland the undersigned visited village Sechuma of Kohima block which is 32 kilometer away from the Kohima Town. Accessibility to the village during monsoon is difficult as the approach road from highway to the village is made of loose boulders of about 10 kilometer stretch. The village has 102 household comprising 525 populations all belonging to tribal tribes. The major source of income is farming and poultry.

The village Sechuma is a unique model of how VWSC, DWSC and CCDU have worked in close coordination to achieve total sanitation coverage under TSC programme. It is also an excellent model of effective utilization of Twelfth Finance Commission fund for management of water supply schemes. In the State of Nagaland the Panchayati Raj Institutions does not exist as such the Village Council function as Gram Panchayat as per the State Act.

The Village Water Supply and Sanitation Committee comprising three women and three men was found the driving force in achieving total coverage of individual households, school (one) toilet and Anganwadi (one). The School and Anganwadi also have excellent water supply system. All the IHH, School and Anganwadi have display-board indicating that it was constructed under TSC programme of GOI

Approach adopted under TSC

VWSC members were first trained under CCDU regarding all aspect of TSC including construction technique of the toilets. In turn the VWSC members carried out door to door advocacy to promote construction of individual house holds toilets. In fact the individual households already had kutcha toilets in the form of pit on which wooden planks are placed for squatting. Fly nuisance because of exposed excreta, resulting frequent out break of diarrhea was quite common. As such the major emphasis of advocacy was the need for conversion of open pit latrine to safe water seal latrine and its benefit.

As per norms under TSC fund was provided to each of the individual households and beneficiaries were left to construct their toilet as per their own preference but under the supervision of the VWSC members.

NGP Village

The undersigned along with Chief Engineer, PHED, Government of Nagaland along with a team of senior officers of the Department and Village Council members inspected 40% of the households and found well constructed toilets and 100% usage. It was informed that the people in this village traditionally did not go for open defecation, but did not have appropriate toilet facilities. The School and Anganwadi toilet with water supply facilities is excellent. The whole village surrounding was found very clean. The team has certified that the village Sechuma qualifies for NGP award for the current year. The Inspection Report duly signed by the undersigned, Chief Engineer, PHED, Government of Nagaland and VWSC members has been submitted to Director (CRSP) recommending the village Sechuma for NGP award. When informed about their eligibility for NGP award, and President of India is going to award NGP award sometime in October in Guwahati, the villagers were surprised. Some of the IHHTs constructed in the village are shown below:



Toilet with storage for grain



Toilet with attached bath



Toilet constructed with tin sheet and plastic



Toilet constructed with tin sheet

Twelfth Finance Commission Fund (TFC)

Public Health Engineering Department has received Rs 8.00 crore under the 12th Finance Commission during the current financial year for maintenance of rural water supply and sanitation system. The PHED Department has distributed this fund to 549 village councils, out of 1386 villages after imparting extensive training under CCDU on various issues related to operation and maintenance of the RWSS systems. Village Sechuma has received about Rs 2.00 lakh under TFC. Spring source based water supply system provided by PHED is located at an inconvenient location of the village. People had to walk considerable distance both horizontal and vertical distance to collect daily water requirement. With the available TFC fund the VWSC held a series of meeting with the community and arrived at consensus that four more bulk supply points are to be constructed at strategic points with a provision for stored water for washing cloths and also provision for domestic connection based on demand and willing to pay monthly charge. Community has also contributed in construction of new supply points and also provided their labour. Interacting with the local people revealed their satisfaction and pride having achieved total sanitation and drinking water adequacy by their own endeavour.



Water supply point provided by PHED

Water supply point constructed by VWSC

(II) Visit to Thahekhu village in Dimapur district

Groundwater is the source of drinking water for a major part of the population in the District, but the water has high iron content. Due to this, the PHED Government of Nagaland has planned the use of Mini Iron Removal Plants for meeting the domestic water supplies / requirements, especially in Dimapur District

This method of Mini Iron Removal Plant (MIRP) incorporates the principles of simple aeration, settling and filtration. The trays installed in series contains coke which acts as a oxidizing agent and water with excess iron passing through the perforation at the bottom of the tray results further aeration resulting district reduction of excess iron from water . These units are simple in design, easy to install and operate and maintain.

The PHED, Village Council Members and VWSC have entered into tripartite agreement for operation and maintenance by the community. In general the capacity of each unit is 10,000 liters and per capita cost of the unit works out to Rs 1500.



An old Iron removal plants installed in a village in Dimapur District

Similar Iron removal plants installed in village Thahekhu is unique because the water supply from the IRP is limited to only for drinking water purpose and water is supplied to each house holds through distribution system only for 15 minutes. The same distribution system is than used for supply of rain water, which is collected from the roof of the Church in that locality.



IR plant supplying water only for drinking

Rain water supply collected from roof of Church

Conclusion

- 1) Government of Nagaland has very effectively utilized the Twelfth Finance Commission fund for maintenance of rural water supply and sanitation system. The capacity development activities of the Village Council Members and VWSC is commendable
- 2) The concept that people are not willing to pay for implementation of drinking water supply and sanitation facilities is limited to the Government officials. If the Community is allowed to play the central role in the planning, implementation and management of water supply and sanitation facilities not only they are willing to contribute considerable amount of fund for the development of the same but are also willing to manage the systems ensuring efficiency and equitable use and encourage conservation and protection of water resources.
- 3) It was found in many villages across the country under the sector reform pilot projects that, where people believe government should provide free water and sanitation facilities willingness to contribute is very low. The people of Nagaland has the added advantage of having very strong social capital, self pride and with strong traditional local leaders and hierarchies, including formal power structure of Village Councils, as such involving community in all social and infrastructure development becomes much easier.
- 4) The Government of India norms and guidelines should be broad-based allowing lots of flexibility to the community/VWSC to plan RWSS projects based on the principal of demand responsive planning mechanism to suite the local requirement rather than adoption of universal norms and standards specified by GoI.
- 5) Level of service should be linked to the issue of demand, commonly expressed through user willingness-to –pay for a particular level of service and satisfaction. And coverage of a particular village should be indicated based on these criteria. The existence of different tiers of planning authority vested in the central, state, and local self-government systems creates difficulties with regard to norms and standards adopted in decentralized planning.