

Alternative Management Models in Small Town Water Supply Schemes in Sri-Lanka.

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ABSTRACT: National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB) of Sri-Lanka as a part of its rural water supply and sanitation development programs for small towns has introduced 03 alternative management models by ensuring the beneficiary participation for the management of water supply systems. This innovative approach is put into operation in 54 small towns throughout the country at present. In each model Community Based Organization (CBO), Local Authority (PS) and the NWSDB is jointly shared the roles and responsibilities as respecting to each other's. CBOs are the nucleus of this implementation process and the sharing of responsibility was assured through the establishment of tripartite Operational and Maintenance agreement (MOU). The recognition of the system being established with the acceptance of all the major parties involved in water sector.

1 INTRODUCTION

The demand of water supply for small towns (development centers) in rural areas of Sri-Lanka has been increased for the past few decades and lack of adequate water supply services has hampered the development potential in small towns to a greater extent. The government of Sri-Lanka is having a tremendous challenge to improve water services for these small towns considering the strategies that are sustainable in socioeconomic, technical and environmental aspects. Until mid 90s, small town water supply was given low prominence and sporadic attempts have been tried out for the implementation of sustainable Small Town Water Supply Program (STWSP) by government and non-government institutions.

The recent innovative approaches used by the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB) of Sri-Lanka, which is a part of its rural water supply and sanitation development programs for small towns under different funding sources such as International Development Agency (IDA), Asian Development Bank (ADB), have ensured the comprehensive participation of all the stakeholders in the whole development process leading to sustainable system development. The main concept in this strategy had been a gradual empowerment of the beneficiaries and other stakeholders to participate in planning, implementation and also the management of water systems constructed. The STWSP adopts a novel and innovative approach by placing the beneficiary community in the center of the project implementation process by giving responsibility to the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) established in STWSP. These CBOs are actively involved in decision-making at all the phases of planning, implementation and consolidation and management of facilities.

This paper intends to highlight the strategies that are being adopted for the consolidation of small town water supply systems with the total participation of beneficiary for the sustainable management of the system.

2 APPLICATIONS OF MANAGEMENT MODELS

The basically small town in Sri-Lanka is considered as having a population of 2000-6000 inhabitants, characterized area of high population density and existence of high development potential, substantial number of small scale industries and other commercial enterprises and infrastructures facilities.

At the inception of the small town water supply management, three types of alternative management models had been formulated and tested by the World Bank Assisted Small Town Water Supply and Sanitation Program (STWSSP) through the acceptance of legal and social framework of Sri-

Lanka. The Community Based Organization (CBO), Local Governments (PS) and the NWSDB jointly shared the roles and responsibilities in each model. The responsible main partner for operational and maintenance differs in each model and the other functions are shared among the other partners of the management models. Available model and main responsibility vested by each party at present are classified in table 1.

Table 1 Alternative management models and management responsibilities

Model No.	Available management models for STWSSP	Management responsibilities in O&M	
		Program implementation	Program monitoring and supervision
01	Community Based Organization Managed Small Town Water Supply Scheme (CBO managed O&M model)	CBO	Local Government (PS)+NWSDB
02	Local Government (PS) Managed Small Town Water Supply Scheme (PS managed O&M model)	Local Government (PS)	CBO+NWSDB
03	National Water Supply and Drainage Board Managed Small Town Water Supply Scheme (NWSDB managed O&M model)	NWSDB	CBO + Local Government (PS)

3 PRINCIPLES ADOPTED IN FORMULATING MODELS

- Communities decide the appropriate operational and management (O&M) model for their schemes
- Community is the center of the decision making in all management models
- All involved parties are more or less responsible for the smooth function of three management models
- Management models have been formulated within the legal framework of the country
- Flexibility has been built on selection and finalization of the options in all models upon the size; complexity and the techniques used of the sub project.
- Sustainability of the management models depends on legal and social recognition and mutual consent of each involved parties.
- User community, local administration and national institute of water supply have been mutually ensured the efficiency of management models.
- The system has been developed accordance to the prevailing policies existed in the RWS sector.

4 PRESENT PROGRESS AND SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM

Management of water supply scheme in an efficient way through sharing of responsibility is a challengeable task and STWSP has taken tremendous effort to institutionalize the system at sustainable manner. Deviating from the conventional management system applied by the various involved parties, this alternative management models has given the new direction to establish community based sustainable small town water supply program at national level. The STWSP adapts a novel and

innovative approach by placing the beneficiary community in the center of the process by giving responsibility to the CBOs established in STWSP. These CBOs are actively involved in decision making in all the phases of planning, implementation and consolidation activities in all models. The system development and application of alternative management models in STWSP is depicted in figure1. Major characteristics in the system are;

- The Community Based Organization (CBO), Local Authority (PS) and the NWSDB in each model jointly share the roles and responsibilities. The operational and maintenance authority of the water supply scheme has finalized at the project participatory planning (PPP) process. The responsible key partner for operation & maintenance differ for each model and the other functions are shared among the balance management partners.
- The possible management model will be recognized as soon as the scheme selection finalized and involved parties agreed upon:
 - If new scheme constructed–Most favorable model is CBO management
This is the model where the CBO who takes over the responsibility as main actor for operation and maintenance (O&M) of the small town water supply scheme.
 - If augmentation to the existing PS managed water scheme- Most favorable model is PS management
This is the model where the PS who takes over the responsibility as main actor for operation and maintenance (O&M) of the small town water supply scheme.
 - If extension is taken from NWSDB managed water scheme - Most favorable model is NWSDB management. This is the model where the NWSDB who takes over the responsibility as main actor for operation and maintenance (O&M) of the small town water supply scheme.
- Tripartite consolidation and O&M agreements have developed for the each management model and role and responsibilities are mutually shared through signing of memorandum of understanding (MOU). Recognition and acceptance of the MOU has ensured through the prevailing legal and social framework of the country.
- Tripartite involved operational and maintenance systems are activated through the introduction of community action plan (CAP) for each management model .All the management decisions on operational and maintenance are scrutinized and confirmed by the responsible parties involved.
- The implementation mechanism and coordination structure of the management models have been linked with the prevailing rural water supply policy of Sri Lanka.
- On the strength of the experience gained from the pre-tested management models, 54 small water supply sachems were built with the confidence on implementing in a widest scale with assurance of success. The major water supply programs, which have involved in small town water supply program are very much keen on this novel approach and demonstrate the process in a sustainable manner.

The present progress of the model application in management of small town is depicted in Table 2

Table 2. Present progress of the model application

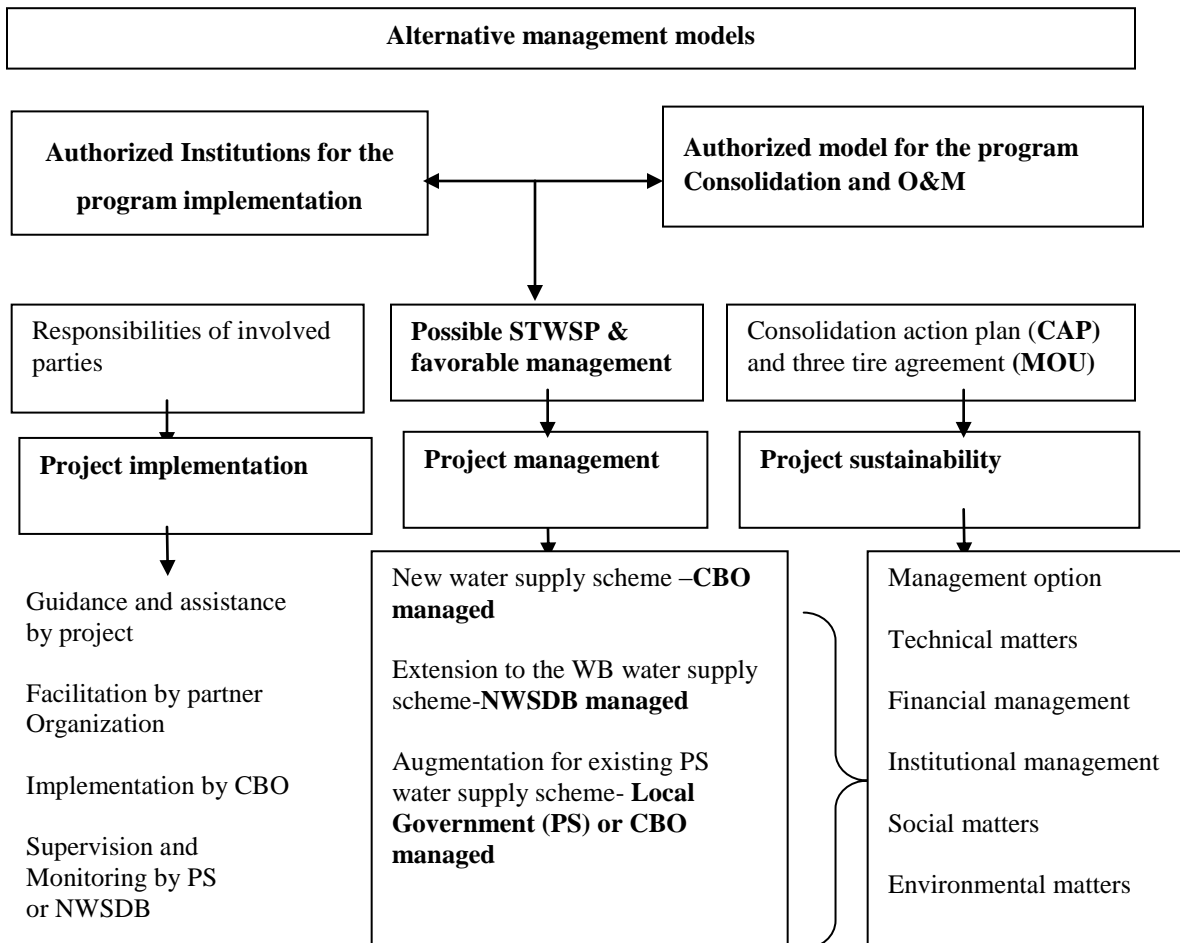
N O.	Name of the water supply program	NO.of STWSS constructed	Authorised institution in Operation & Maintenance (O&M)		
			CBO Managed	PS Managed	NWSDB Managed
01	World Bank Assisted Small Town	12	08	03	01

	Water supply and Sanitation Project				
02	ADB Assisted Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme	40	27	03	10
03	New-Zealand funded Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme	01	01	0	0
04	Switzerland funded Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme	01	01	0	0
Total		54	37	06	11

5 APPLICATION OF MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR STWSSP

Applications of management model for the each and every small town are purely decided by the mutual consent of major parties of the program. Water Board, Local Government (PS) and the Community Based Organizations are the major parties who have involved for the project completion and operational and management plan will finalized through their maximum participation. Water tariff, operational and maintenance staff, procedure of supplying of water connection ,water quality testing ,financial management ,record keeping and other extra activities have to be discussed at the preparation of the O & M action plan and final decisions will endorsed by the O& M authority of the scheme.

Figure1. Strategy used for the system development of alternative management models



6 LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

User participation in system development, sharing of responsibility in management, capacity building of involved parties, transfer of technology to the lowest possible level and efficient and effective management would be the major areas concerned for the formulation of alternative management model for the water supply system in small towns. While recommending that the management model of CBO is the most favorable institution to handle O&M work of community based small town water supply schemes, the following specific suggestions and recommendation are being made to make it workable and sustainable management, taking into consideration the legal and political vulnerability in which it is placed now.

- Provide legal ratification to the tripartite agreement thereby ensuring legal status and formal recognition for the CBO and recognition to undertake the management of the schemes.
- Unless the CBO is recognized as a legal body, it runs the risk of being vulnerable to political and other pressures. Establishment of regulation (By-laws) for major parties would give immense support to CBOs managed water supply schemes.
- Being a recognized and accepted institution in water sector, the continuous representation of NWSDB and Local government for the Ex-co board of CBOs has strengthened the technical and financial competency of CBO managed water supply schemes.
- Provide for impartial authority, such as the chief secretary of the Provincial Council to be the arbitrator in case a dispute arises between or among the parties to the tripartite agreement.
- Politicians should be well aware of the government policy on community based rural water supply program and the blessings of all the parties involved in rural administration to be strengthened through out the process.
- The sustainability of the management models depends on legal and social recognition and their inter-connections. This has to be strengthened through out the process.
- No doubt that the NWSDB is the strongest institution legally and financially in managing water supply schemes in Sri-Lanka. However when it comes to the situation of managing community based small town water supply schemes it is desired if their over dominance in decision making is avoided.
- CBO represents the user community and there would be a greater advantage of ensuring their requirements are met in more productive manner. This will also help to meet the aspiration of CBO members effectively compared to other models.
- The position of CBOs in financial stability, technical efficiency, legal entity and institutional establishment are comparatively weak at the beginning and it will improve as experience gained.
- On the strength of the experience gained with the implementation of 54 small towns in 10 districts, the major parties have built the confidence that management model could be applied in a widest scale with assurance of success.

7 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS ON SMALL TOWN MANAGEMENT MODELS

The recent assessment (2004) on management model of small town water supply schemes was launched by World Bank assisted Second Community Water Supply and Sanitation Project has found that CBOs were the most favorable authority to undertake the management of community based small town water supply schemes, as it assures the total participation of all the stakeholders. The assessment was based on the performance of 03 management models are currently adopted in 09 STWS programs. The assessment's main findings are:

NWSDB Management Models - Technical competency and recognition of models are very much high than the other models. But efficiency and effectiveness of services are not taken place as expected level due to some procedural restrictions. All the management decisions are unilateral, beneficiary communities are not consulted and the management seems to be exclusively top down.

Local Authority Management Model - The competence and commitment of LAs in O&M is not progressive and generally politically motivated decisions are badly affected to the performance of

STWS program. Often decision made on the setting of water tariff, provision of water connections and scheme coverage are take place on their personal and political interests.

CBOs Management Model - This is the model where the CBO who takes over the responsibility as main actor for operation and maintenance (O&M) of the small town water supply scheme. The CBOs managed small town water supply schemes are being functioned at very satisfactorily, where the support and assistance are given by the LAs. The assessment also exposed that though the CBOs are most competent and efficient institutions in management of STWS, the management skills to be improved and legal acceptance and recognition to be strengthened through the legal frame work of the country.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Management of water supply scheme in an efficient way through sharing of responsibility is a challengeable task and STWSP has taken tremendous effort to institutionalize the system at sustainable manner. It is evident that where the water supply and sanitation programs are efficiently implemented and CBO has shown their enthusiasm, with a little initiative by an outsider and appropriate guidance, the concept of model can be easily implemented. However, it is important that, even in these CBO model, further necessary assistance and guidance are to be provided for certain period of time for them to undertake total management. Also, creation an effective and strong link between line agencies and CBOs are required to ensure the sustainability of this concept, however, the assistance are not necessary mean financial but supervision and monitoring.

9 REFERENCE

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