

# **Uttarakhand RWSS Project (India): A Trend Setter of the Decentralization Program in the Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Sector**

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The Government of Uttarakhand (GoUK) has implemented the World Bank assisted Uttarakhand Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project (URWSSP: 2006-2015) based on a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) for decentralizing service delivery responsibilities. The Project development objective was to improve the effectiveness of rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) services through decentralization and the increased role of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (local self-government) and the local communities. The project aimed to benefit about 1.2 million people through improved rural water supply and sanitation services. This paper attempts to assess the effectiveness and replication of the URWSSP both nationally and internationally, based on good practices and lessons learned.

## **II. Background information on this Paper:**

- 1) This paper is based on solid information from the World Bank project that was implemented from 2006-15, with all programs, processes, achievements and challenges fully documented over 8-9 year period! As you know the Bank maintains an excellent record of the implementation progress and issues, and how these are addressed. The Aide Memoires and other records, duly approved by the management are available.
- 2) The project has successfully demonstrated '*how to decentralize*' and showcases the way for decentralization for India as well as other countries. This decentralization is very different from the earlier 'Swajal' program implemented through NGOs.
- 3) The project addresses the weakness of the earlier SWAJAL model, including the 10% CAPEX contributions by the communities. This project only takes a 'token' flat amount per household based on an affordability analysis. The Project Appraisal Document (available on the web) has the objectives, value added, and the detailed design of the project.
- 4) Based on the decentralized institutional arrangements designed and implemented successfully under this project (through the Panchayati Raj System), the project has twice received the prestigious *Right to Information Award (RTI)* for good governance and transparency. This is the only World Bank assisted project in India which has received such an award!
- 5) The project has designed and implemented a Sector Information / Monitoring and Evaluation System, which is the first one of its kind, and is being used to develop similar programs for other States in India (example the recent Rural WSS Project for Low Income States).
- 6) The project officials are being invited to develop similar programs in other States in India, including guidance through Workshops, site-visits, etc.

- 7) Three independent reviews were carried out prior to the closure of the project, and all data and information on efficiency and sustainability is derived from these reviews. These reviews are: Sustainability Evaluation Exercise, Impact Assessment, and Healthy Home Survey.
- 8) A detailed internal and external review was carried out prior to closure of this project, The details are presented in the Implementation Completion Report (ICR) of the World Bank, published and disseminated (ICR attached).
- 9) This paper is derived from this ICR and other background documents that were used to prepare the ICR. (The World Bank published ICR for this project is attached).
- 10) A detailed presentation on 'how to decentralize' will be developed for the RWSN Workshop, if this paper is accepted.

### III. Context, aims and activities undertaken

2. In 2006-07, a survey conducted by the GoUK reported that only half of the habitations in the state were fully covered with functioning water supply schemes, 38 percent were partially covered, and about 12 percent were not covered. About 75–80 percent of the rural population also did not have access to sanitary latrines. The state was also affected by water scarcity. Data from existing water supply schemes indicated that nearly 30 percent of the schemes experienced diminishing freshwater supplies, especially during the summer months. This resulted in most villagers spending an average of 1–3 hours per per day collecting water for domestic use. Water-related diseases were seen as major health issues in the rural areas. These issues were exacerbated by inadequate operation and maintenance (O&M) and water supply systems that had outlived their design life.



3. The GoUK prioritized RWSS as a pillar in its development agenda and envisaged universal coverage of safe and potable water and sanitation at the end of the Eleventh Plan (2008–2012). The Government's vision also delineated that “the rural local government in partnership with rural communities, shall plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain their water supply and sanitation schemes, so that they get potable water and attain health and hygiene benefits. The GoUK and its sector institutions shall act as supporter, facilitator, and co-financier and as per need shall provide technical assistance, training and cater for bigger construction works and sectoral contingencies.” This was in line with the Government of India's (GoI's) reform agenda to evolve from a target-based, supply-driven program to a demand-based approach. The URWSSP focused on building on these reforms and on scaling up the demand-driven, community-led model across the state. The project had three components outlined below.

- **Component A: RWSS Sector Development.** This component was designed to support the state's sector reform process by establishing and enhancing its institutional capacity to implement, manage, and sustain the state's medium-term sector development program.
- **Component B: RWSS Infrastructure Investments.** This component was designed to improve service and sustainable access to RWSS services by financing the following investments: (a) new investments in water supply schemes and catchment-area protection works; (b) community mobilization and development activities; and (c) sanitation programs.
- **Component C: RWSS Program Management Support and M&E.** This component was designed to support (a) operational and administrative cost associated with the implementation of the sector-wide approach basket of the state's medium-term sector program and (b) monitoring and evaluation.

#### IV. Key achievements of the project

4. Following are the key achievements of the project:

##### **Project - Key Outcome Indicators**

*Evidence of Institutional Effectiveness in the Sector:* Strong evidence of institutional effectiveness based on independent technical and social audits (behavior change; timely completion of program; cost effectiveness and sustainability).

*Increase in number of population having access to improved water supply services:* Project exceeded targets by directly benefitting 1.57 million rural people against the project target of 1.20 million.

*High satisfaction level in participating communities:* Independent reviews show 98% users reporting “satisfaction” with the water supply and sanitation services.

*Increase in the number of households adopting improved hygiene and sanitation practices:* Increase of 0.85 million households adopting improved hygiene and sanitation practices. Sustainable toilet coverage from 21% baseline to 97% at present through effective IEC and capacity building programs.

*Improved financial performance of the water supply schemes:* O&M of SVS fully devolved to GPs, with 80% cost recovery. O&M of MVS as per UJS /GoUK cost sharing policy.

##### **Key Achievements**

**(i) RWSS SWAp Decentralization Program:** The Project has established the RWSS decentralization program across the sector in Uttarakhand, moving from traditional ‘supply driven’ mode to decentralized service delivery responsibilities, empowering the PRIs in planning, designing, implementing and maintaining schemes. The project has involved all sector agencies, including UJN and UJS in implementing the SWAp-decentralization program, irrespective of sources of financing. The project facilitated formation of 5,481 UWSSCs as dedicated units under the GPs, responsible for water supply and sanitation services.

**(ii) RWSS Coverage and Services:** The project has exceeded targets by directly benefitting 1.57 million rural people against the project target of 1.20 million (achieving 131% of the target). The indirect beneficiaries are 7.3 million rural population which benefitted through the SWAp program and policies.

**(a) Water Supply:** Water supply works are completed for 3,814 SVSs and 37 MVSs covering 8,641 habitations against a target of 8,270 habitations, achieving 104% of the target through decentralization mode.

**(b) Sanitation:** 857,768 Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs) with more than 90% usage have been completed against a target of 886,301 IHHLs (97% target achieved) under national programs such as TSC, NBA, and SBM. Project has demonstrated sustainable toilet coverage from 21% baseline to 97% at project closure through effective IEC and capacity building programs. 679 GPs achieved Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, against a target of 475 GPs.

**(c) Catchment Area programs:** 2,447 schemes have benefitted from Catchment Area Conservation Management Program (CACMP) for improving source sustainability. The 37 percent habitation coverage under the Catchment Area Conservation Management Program (CACMP) surpassed the PAD target of 25 percent.

**(iii) Integrated Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Catchment Area Programs:** The water supply schemes are integrated with sanitation programs, solid waste management, catchment area programs, and health and hygiene promotion activities for maximizing the health benefits to the rural communities.

**(iv) Capacity Building of RWSS Institutions:** The project has built capacity with the following institutions:

State Level (4 institutions): SWSM, Swajal PMU, UJN, UJS

District Level (65 institutions): 13 Divisions each of Swajal, UJN, UJS, DWSM and DWSCs

Village Level: (a) Gram Panchayats: 2622 nos.; (b) UWSSCs: 5481 nos.  
 Currently, all the sector agencies, including the UJN and UJS, are operating and functioning under the new institutional arrangements, irrespective of the financing source.

**(v) Governance and Accountability:** The project has developed and successfully implemented the scheme-cycle processes, including independent reviews, technical and social audits, grievance redressal and beneficiary feed-back programs. The project has twice received the prestigious RTI Award for good governance, accountability and transparency.

**(vi) Cost Effectiveness of Schemes:** The average project cost of SVS is Rs 4854 per capita compared to appraisal estimates of Rs 7031 per capita. The project has recorded a saving of 30% compared to its own per-capita cost targets and 60% cost savings when compared to GoI (NRDWP) norm of Rs 12,000 per capita cost. Similarly, the project cost for MVS is Rs 7972 compared to appraisal estimates of Rs 10320 per capita resulting in 22.5% cost savings, and GoI (NRDWP) norm of Rs 25,000 per capita, resulting in 68% cost savings. Decentralization has resulted in capital cost reduction in SVS and MVS.

**(vii) Sustainability of Schemes: Technical, Institutional, and Financial**

Sustainability Evaluation Exercise (SEE) at the project completion stage shows 90% schemes are sustainable based on technical (including source), financial and institutional aspects.

- \* 97% of the sources were found to be sustainable. (Remaining 3% sources were affected by recent disaster).
- \* 99% of schemes have formed fully functioning UWSSCs as per the decentralization program.
- \* 36% women participation in the UWSSCs against the project target of 30%.
- \* Full O&M cost devolved to the Gram Panchayat, with 80% O&M cost recovery.
- \* More than 90% ‘usage’ of toilets constructed.
- \* 32% of schemes achieved ODF status against the project target of 30%.
- \* 98% users reported “satisfaction” with the water & sanitation services under the scheme.

**(viii) RWSS Sector O&M Policy:** The GoUKD has designated UJS as the ‘back-stopping’ agency for technical support, as desired by the GPs/ UWSSCs.

**V. Innovative Features**

5. The URWSSP differed significantly from previous efforts to make available RWSS services in a sustainable manner. The tenets of the project included the following (i) a community led participatory program which aimed to provide drinking water facilities in rural areas with minimum provision of 40 lpcd; (ii) adoption of a demand-responsive, adaptable approach along with community participation based on empowerment of villagers to ensure their full participation in the project through a decision making role in the choice of the drinking water scheme, planning, design, implementation, control of finances and management arrangements; (iii) full ownership of drinking water assets with User Water and Sanitation Committee; (iv) communities to have the powers to plan, implement, operate, maintain and manage water supply and sanitation schemes, (v) partial capital cost sharing either in cash or kind including labour or both, 100% responsibility of operation and maintenance (O&M) by the users in case of Single Village Water Supply Schemes; (vi) an integrated service delivery mechanism; (vii) taking up of conservation measures through rain water harvesting and ground water recharge systems for sustained drinking water supply; and (viii) shifting the role of Government from a service provider to a facilitator.

6. The Project Cycle followed the phases of detailed planning, implementation and Operation and Maintenance, as outlined below:

Project Cycle for Single Village Schemes:



Each scheme cycle included four phases, including pre-planning (2 months), planning (3-6 months), implementation (6-18 months), and operation and maintenance phase (4 months). The duration of each phase depended on the scheme size, technology type and the time it required to mobilize the communities.

(a) Pre-planning phase:

Major outputs of the pre-planning phase include: (i) selection of support organization (SO) and (ii) collection of baseline data and (iii) selection of GP/habitations.

(b) Planning Phase:

Following activities were under taken during Planning Phase: (i) mobilization of communities, (ii) formation of the User Water and Sanitation Committees (UWSSC), (iii) selection of water supply & sanitation technology by the users in community wide meeting, (iv) capacity building of SO/Gram Panchayat/UWSSCs members, (v) preparation of engineering estimates and community action plan, and (vi) collection of upfront cash and O&M community contributions.

(c) Implementation Phase:

The outputs of this phase included: (i) construction of water supply, sanitation and catchment area schemes by GP/UWSSC, (ii) independent third party construction supervision, (iii) collection of balance cash/labor and O&M community contributions, (iv) training by SOs to all stakeholders at village level, and (v) preparation of the Implementation Phase Completion Report.

(d) Operation and Maintenance Phase: The District Implementing Agency (DIA) provided technical assistance to the UWSSCs after commissioning of the water supply schemes to place the O&M system in order. Trainings at the GP/UWSSC level were conducted by DIA. After establishing O&M system and completing all the activities stipulated in the agreement, the DIA formally exited from the GP. Thereafter, the scheme maintenance continues to be carried out by the UWSSC. One of the sector agency, the Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan was designated as the professional Back Stopping Agency in case of major repairs which are beyond the capacity of the UWSSCs.

7. Following are some of the innovations and initiatives that the GoUK has taken to steer the reform process in the State:

- Habitation as unit of planning: The habitation is the focal point for planning, implementation, operation & maintenance of the water supply scheme, rather than revenue village or the Gram Panchayat (GP). Because a particular habitation may have different demand compared to its neighboring habitation due to geographic and socio-economic variations between the habitations.
- Legality to the User Water & Sanitation Sub Committee (UWSSC): The users benefited from a particular water supply scheme constitute the UWSSC. Appropriate provisions have been made in the Panchayat Raj Act of the State to bestow legality to the UWSSC as per 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment.
- Model Bye-laws for functioning of UWSSC: Model bye-laws have been put in place for smooth conduct of business of UWSSC. The model bye-laws are adapted by the UWSSC to suite their specific needs and approved by the GP. The State government has authorized the GP/ UWSSC to fix the water tariff and collect tariff from the users and has terminated



‘Agree-To-Do’ meeting for finalization of technological option

these rights of Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan in project villages.

- Fine-tuning of Support Organizations’ (SOs) Selection Criteria: The Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are engaged as Support Organizations (SOs) for community development and technical support to the UWSSCs. In order to weed out ‘Bad quality’ from ‘Good quality’ SOs comprehensive eligibility criteria as well as evaluation formats are being used. NGOs having strong grassroots experience and visionary approach are involved as partners in the project.
- Integrated delivery of water supply services: The water supply schemes are integrated with catchment area programs, household and village environmental sanitation programs, solid waste management and health and hygiene awareness promotion programs, in order to maximize water supply and health benefits to the communities. Necessary convergence and dovetailing of programs and funds are being done at the State level.



Rain Water Harvesting System



Clear Water Reservoir



Plantation for source sustainability



Individual Household Latrine

- Constitution of district level Technical Review Committee (TRC): A district level TRC is constituted to review the technological options proposed by the various User Groups, analyze the justification of Single Village Scheme (SVS)/Multi Village Scheme (MVS), and to finalize the scheme identification plan.
- Single Set of Schedule of Rates: The district schedule of rates for various engineering items/works/materials (local and non-local) are jointly prepared by all the three implementing agencies based on the existing analysis of rates and are approved by the District Water & Sanitation Mission (DWSM) for all the implementing agencies.
- Capacity building of all stakeholders: Capacity Building of all stakeholders was felt essential for effective and efficient implementation of the project. Special training programs have been developed and implemented through the local training institutions to sensitize the state, district and village stakeholders and functionaries regarding the RWSS SWAp program.

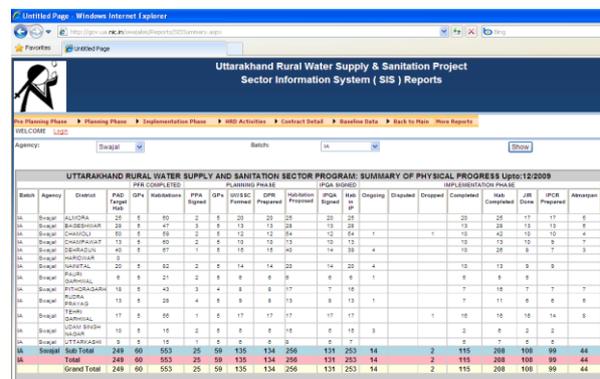
- Information, Education, and Communications (IEC): IEC activities, mainly to promote the decentralization agenda and SWAp program, have been carried out through workshops, cross-visits, competitions, IEC stalls, TV programs, etc. A couple of short documentary films have been prepared on the good practices currently being implemented under the project. A quarterly newsletter- ‘Swajal Samachar’ is regularly published for dissemination of project philosophies and principles as well as experience sharing and lessons learnt.



Training on documentation & account keeping maintenance

- Multi Village Scheme (MVS) Versus Single Village Scheme (SVS): The GoUK policy clearly states that the MVS would be constructed only when SVS are not feasible & the construction of the common assets of MVS head works, distribution main till the head of each covered village will be executed by the sector institution and construction of intra village water supply scheme works will be taken up by GP/UWSSC.
- Insurance of the schemes: Insurance is an instrument through which sustainability of the water supply scheme is ensured in natural calamities dominated state like Uttarakhand.
- Social Audit Committee: This committee is constituted in each water supply scheme to monitor the adherence of project principles and rules in selection of beneficiaries, implementation of sub projects and all decisions of UWSSC.
- Grievance redressal mechanism: On receipt of a grievance, the UWSSC convenes a community wide meeting and it is put up before the members of the UWSSC and the community. This process is facilitated by DIA and the representatives of the SO and the GP.

- Monitoring and performance tracking: A web based robust monitoring and performance tracking system is in place to monitored processes, inputs, outputs and outcomes, including indicators of change under the project. The reports include (i) Pre planning Phase (ii) Planning Phase (iii) Detailed Project Report (DPR) detail (iv) Implementation Phase (v) Contract details (vi) Baseline data (vii) MVS and (viii) O & M



UTTARAKHAND RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SECTOR PROGRAM: SUMMARY OF PHYSICAL PROGRESS upto:12/2009																			
Sl. No.	Agency	District	PFR COMPLETED			PLANNING PHASE			IPCR REPORT		IMPLEMENTATION PHASE								
			AMT. Target	AMT. Spent	%	IPCR Planned	IPCR Prepared	IPCR Signed	IPCR Issued	Origin	Disputed	Dropped	Completed	IPCR Done	IPCR Prepared				
1.	Swajal	ALMORA	25	5	20	2	5	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20		
2.	Swajal	BANSHIKANTH	25	5	20	2	5	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20		
3.	Swajal	CHAMOLI	80	5	6	2	5	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12		
4.	Swajal	CHAMPAIN	12	5	42	2	5	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		
5.	Swajal	DEHRADUN	40	5	12	2	5	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		
6.	Swajal	HARIDWAR	2	5	250	2	5	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		
7.	Swajal	NAINITAL	20	5	25	2	5	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14		
8.	Swajal	PANCHKULA	8	5	62	2	5	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		
9.	Swajal	ROHTAK	18	5	28	2	5	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		
10.	Swajal	UDAIPUR	13	5	38	2	5	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8		
11.	Swajal	DEHRADUN	17	5	29	2	5	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17		
12.	Swajal	DEHRADUN	10	5	50	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5		
13.	Swajal	DEHRADUN	3	5	16	2	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
14.	Swajal	UTTARAKHAND	249	60	24	25	59	135	134	256	121	253	14	2	115	208	108	99	44
15.	Swajal	Sub Total	249	60	24	25	59	135	134	256	121	253	14	2	115	208	108	99	44
16.	Swajal	Grand Total	249	60	24	25	59	135	134	256	121	253	14	2	115	208	108	99	44

Web based monitoring

- Elaborate Exit Strategy: The Exit or ‘Atmarpan’ is a process of gradual withdrawal of the SO and the DIA from the village in anticipation that the community has been empowered to operate and maintain its water supply and sanitation schemes on its own. The project has put in place an elaborate exit policy to ensure sustainability of the created assets.
- Sustainability Evaluation Mechanism: All steps are being taken during design, implementation and maintenance stages to ensure sustainability of schemes. A periodic review is carried out to monitor sustainability. The project has designed a Sustainability Evaluation Exercise (SEE) to assess the sustainability of completed schemes which are more than one year old.

## VI. Lessons learnt

8. Following are the key lessons learnt

- **Decentralization program** is critical for improving services through empowerment of Local Self-Government (PRIs) and rural communities;
- **Water & Sanitation Committee** plays an important role as community institution for managing RWSS;
- Usefulness of ‘**scheme cycle**’ in implementing SWAp program;
- **Community procurement and monitoring** has advantages for cost reduction;
- **Improved sustainability** can be demonstrated through PRI/community managed RWSS schemes;
- **Empowerment of women and vulnerable groups** is important for sustainability of schemes;
- **Inclusive approach** needs to be incorporated for covering BPL and SC/ST population;
- Gravity schemes are cost effective and environmental friendly ‘**green schemes**’
- **Transparent M&E system** includes indicators, processes, outputs, outcomes for achieving good governance and transparency practices (RTI award received by the Project);
- **Social Audit and third party audits** is necessary for improving governance and accountability;
- **Sanitation program** needs effective IEC and BCC programs for achieving and sustaining ODF villages;
- **Integrated water supply and sanitation schemes** are critical for achieving sustained outputs;
- **Capacity building and human resources development** programs need to be an integral part of the decentralization program.

9. The unique features of the project have benefited the rural communities in several ways. The culture of dependence on outsiders for a basic necessity like water supply has been considerably reduced by the empowered UWSSC with regard to quality, quantity, service level and system reliability of the RWSS scheme. The benefits accrued to communities due to sustainable O&M of RWSS scheme include: (i) reduction in coping costs due to elimination of storing water in large containers, (ii) elimination of travel time and travel cost in fetching water, (iii) improvement in Mean Time Between Failure (MTBF) due to better quality of repairs and strict control/supervision by the community, and (iv) most importantly, reduced bureaucracy.

## VII. Project impacts: How are these impacts for all stakeholders?

10. Following are the major impacts on stakeholders:

- a) **Impact of SWAp:** The benefits of SWAp approach include: (i) common policy and principles across the sector; (ii) reduction of parallel organizations financed by External Aid Agencies; (iii) unification of implementation criteria; (iv) reduction in the duplication of supervision reports; and (v) fund flow under the same policy, institutional framework across RWSS sector irrespective of implementing agency.
- b) **Impact of Conjoint Approach for water supply and sanitation:** This approach impacted the RWSS sector in many ways: (i) increased usage of sanitation facilities; (ii) reduced open defecation; and (iii) improved health and hygiene factors and environmental sanitation.
- c) **Impact at Community Level:** The project has impacted the communities in many ways:
  - ✓ The community decides on technology choice, service level, local rules and regulations.
  - ✓ The community has ownership of the water supply system, decisions and functioning of the water supply systems.
  - ✓ Increase in the number of people having access to improved water supply and sanitation service delivery

- ✓ Increased social cohesion.
- ✓ Engagement of community in all stages of the water supply scheme cycle.
- ✓ One stand-out benefit was the employment that the project was able to generate by being implemented at the village level.
- ✓ Direct interest to have a system well maintained.

d) Impact at Gram Panchayat Level: The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) members gained valuable experience in decision-making, procurement management, financial management, book keeping etc. due to involvement in the URWSSP, moulding them as the future managers at the village level.

e) Impacted NGO level: The capacity of NGOs was built under the URWSSP, which immensely benefited from the community mobilization contracts in development projects.

f) Impacted Sector Institutions: The two sector institutions UJN and UJS have benefitted as follows: (i) the sector institution engineers have the good perception of community problems; (ii) the communication channels between the sector institution engineers and the community have improved; (iii) the inadequacy of knowledge on participatory planning has been mitigated; (iv) for the first time the water supply engineers recognized the need and criticality of having interaction with the community and learnt the art of integration of engineering aspects with social aspects.

#### VIII. What has happened which would not have happened otherwise?

11. Project has demonstrated the following:

a) Service delivery through Decentralized Institutional Framework

- State level: SWSM and DDWS highest policy making body; SWSM Cell an apex committee responsible for reform/SWAp principles. Headquarters of Swajal, UJN and UJS responsible for coordination, support and implementation of schemes.
- District level: DWSM and DWSCs responsible for review and implementation of the URWSSP for the district and channelizing funds to GP/UWSSC. DPMUs responsible for providing technical guidance and assistance to the UWSSCs.
- GP level: GP responsible for establishing UWSSCs, capacity building, funds flow management etc.
- UWSSC: Responsible for entire operations from planning to O&M stage, including procurement, O&M tariff fixation, collection of user charges etc.
- MVSLC: Responsible for inter village water supply network of multi village schemes.

**Thus, there is a shift in the role of Government from a provider to a facilitator for providing technical assistance.**

b) Decentralization through community participation:

- Role of UWSSCs central to all aspects of planning.
- Enhanced role of marginalized sections in UWSSCs. 30% women and 20% SC/ST representation in UWSSCs.

c) Decentralization in planning phase:

- Community participation in planning phase: UWSSCs involved in pre feasibility studies, demand assessment, selection of technology options etc.
- Community contribution brings greater ownership: Community contributes towards capital cost as well as towards annual O&M cost as advance.
- Awareness building key to success: Participatory campaigns, school rallies, folk performance etc.

d) Decentralization in implementation:

- Procurement managed by UWSSCs
- Community procurement has reduced the duration of implementation phase
- Community procurement has led to reduction in costs of schemes

e) Decentralization in O&M stage:

- Ownership of all O&M activities by UWSSCs, including user charge collection, complaint redressal, accounts management and auditing.

#### **IX. Lessons Learnt:**

12. The major lessons learnt are as follows:

- ❖ It has been proved that the partnership between village communities, NGOs and the government, where the government takes the role of facilitation and co-financing, has worked successfully
- ❖ The project has demonstrated that empowerment of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is a viable and sustainable option for scaling up the decentralized service delivery model, an alternative delivery mechanism, for the RWSS sector.
- ❖ The extensive dissemination of RTI Act provisions have helped in minimizing the possibility of misappropriation, misuse of funds, fraud and corruption cases.

#### **X. Conclusions and Recommendations**

13. The performance assessment review of the project indicates that the presence of an integrated delivery structure through SWAp has resulted in co-ordinated planning and implementation of sanitation and water supply. A co-ordinative institutional infrastructure has been created following the URWSSP guidelines for SWSM at apex level, DWSMs at districts and UWSSCs at the village/habitation level in all project schemes as well as in all NRDWP (GoI) schemes. The URWSSP has positively impacted all involved stakeholders in a big way. The planning and implementation process of RWSS schemes have brought about a major change in the RWSS sector. For the first time the water supply engineers recognized the need and critically of having interaction with the community and learnt the art of integration of engineering aspects with social aspects. Putting belief in the community at the same time maintaining a strict quality check on large number of village level implementing agencies was not an easy role, however the way the project has unfolded it has established the fact that rural water supply and sanitation is more a social engineering than civil engineering. The 'people' factor was given as much consideration as more technical elements are at the outset of the project.

14. In a nut shell, the performance assessment shows that the URWSSP project has satisfactorily achieved its project development objective – i.e. “to improve the effectiveness of RWSS services through decentralization and increased role of PRIs and involvement of local communities”, which can be replicated both nationally and internationally.

#### **XI. References**

- a) The Aide Memoires of World Bank Mission visits and Project Appraisal Document of the Project;
- b) Reports of Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Government of India, New Delhi;
- c) Monthly Progress Reports of the State Water & Sanitation Mission, Uttarakhand;
- d) Sector Information System (SIS) of the project URL: [www.swajalsis.uk.gov.in](http://www.swajalsis.uk.gov.in);
- e) Implementation Completion Report for the Project.