Participating in Government Programmes

The Arghyam Experience

Arghyam
Safe, sustainable water for all

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Content

Acknowledgements 5

Executive Summary 6

1 Introduction 9
- 1.1 Arghyam: A Profile 10
- 1.2 Why Participate in Government Programmes? 11
- 1.3 Arghyam Participation in Government Programmes: A Profile 13
  - 1.3.1 Suvarnajala, Karnataka 14
  - 1.3.2 Sachethana, Karnataka 18
  - 1.3.3 Pani Thiye Panjo, Gujarat 24
  - 1.3.4 Mazha Polima, Kerala 28

2 Learning from Partnerships 32
- 2.1 Why collaborate? 32
- 2.2 Mapping Influence 35
- 2.3 Adding Value to Government Programmes 40

3 Reflections and Way Ahead 46

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACT	Arid Communities and Technologies
AMVS	Abdasa Mahila Vikas Sangathan
ARWSP	Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme
BIRD-K	BAIF Institute for Rural Development, Karnataka
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CBO	Community Based Organisation
GAA	German Agro Action
GoK	Government of Karnataka
GoK	Government of Kerala
GP	Gram Panchayat
IEC	Information, Education, Communication
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
KFFFT	Kutch Fodder Fruit & Forest Trust
MDG's	Millennium Development Goals
MKT	Manav Kalyan Trust
MMCU	Mazhapolima Monitoring & Coordination Unit
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
RDPR	Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Department
RGRHCL	Rajiv Gandhi Rural Housing Corporation Limited
RWH	Rain Water Harvesting
RTRWH	Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting
SDMC	School Development and Management Committees
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
VRTI	Vivekanand Research and Training Institute
WASMO	Water and Sanitation Management Organisation
ZP	Zilla Panchayat

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Executive Summary

Onus of drinking water provision in independent India has been vested largely with the State. Both Union and State Governments have been extending policy, technological and financial support for implementing rural water supply schemes. By the 10th plan, an estimated total of Rs.1,105 billion had been spent on providing drinking water. Yet, at around the same time 2.17 lakh habitations had water quality problems and did not have a safe drinking water source. Huge public expenditure did not necessarily lead to significant improvement in provision of safe water. Given that 170 million Indians still do not have access to safe water, the speed, scope and scale of service delivery and its sustainability issues needed urgent attention. Hence, increasingly Government programmes are opening up to the idea of collaborating with civil society organisations. Conversely, realising that optimising the efficiency of State funded programmes is a better bet to reach out to larger sections of society, civil society organizations are also attempting to work with Government institutions and programmes.

Arghyam, a non profit foundation based in Bangalore has been working solely on water issues since 2005. In an effort to achieve its vision of ensuring safe, sustainable water for all, it has participated in several Government programmes. Over the last 5 years, Arghyam has collaborated in four specific Government programmes. Namely, Suvarnajala, a school roof top rain water harvesting programme in Karnataka; Sachethana, a fluoride mitigation programme in Karnataka; Pani Thiye Panjo, a decentralized drinking water management programme Gujarat and lastly Mazha Polima, an open well recharge programme in Kerala. This document delineates key learnings that resulted from each.

It is generally acknowledged that Civil Society participation in Government programmes addresses issues of equity and marginalization and thereby enables universalization of access. It also generates community ownership over created assets and ensures sustained management. Apart from the above-mentioned, the Arghyam experience reveals that technical innovations which enhanced efficiency of drinking water supply and storage assets seems to have been a significant value add. Innovations in this domain also generated quick buy in and consequent support. Approaching a problem with multipronged strategies was another. Such an approach allowed greater flexibility to adapt to local contexts of demand and capacity. Government programmes also seem to benefit when Civil Society Organizations manage to (a) make innovations cost effective and (b) simplify local management processes of created assets.

In the architecture and mechanics of collaboration, the role of donor organisations emerged as vital. While the Government focus was primarily on creating assets (hardware), Arghyam supported NGOs concentrated more on social/institutional mobilization and awareness building. In due time, these projects helped illustrate the importance of software activities and the Government recognized the same by allocating finances to support software activities in the succeeding stages.

Also, by supporting NGOs/CSOs and investing in developing their capacities, donor institutions helped to instil greater confidence in them. This enhanced the organizations ability to articulate issues more confidently to the Government related to project conceptualisation and implementation. Analysis also reveals that donor promoted activities such as collecting, collating and analysing data for decision making, organizing exchange and exposure, developing and designing systems to track progress, all added significant value to enhance transparency and efficiency of programme delivery. Most importantly, since collaborations operate in a universe of unequal power relations, proactive donor involvement creates more dialogic space for civil society, thereby restoring the balance to some extent.

However, the challenges faced by such partnerships are also immense. The fact that there is no clear policy from the Government that encourages programmes to engage with civil society puts the onus on the latter to prove its value in participating.Often, civil society is perceived more as service delivery agencies in such partnerships and their function of ensuring transparency and accountability gets downplayed. Absence of legitimacy also leads to confusion and affects programme implementation.

Therefore learnings from this study points out the need for participation to gravitate towards partnerships based on mutual respect. This in turn requires formalizing of such collaboration. Unless there is official recognition of Government and civil society collaboration, suggestions and key inputs do not get their due attention and rarely get acted upon.

Dr.V. Kurien Baby, Former District Collector,Thrissur,Kerala addressing a local gathering on the merits of Mazha Polima

1 Introduction

Onus of drinking water provision in independent India has been vested largely with the State. The Constitution of India in Article 47 clearly mentions that the State has to raise "the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people" and lists "improvement of public health as among its primary duties". This has automatically entailed direct State intervention in providing safe drinking water to its citizens. Various State and Centre aided programmes have mobilized significant resources for this. Through a Centrally Sponsored Scheme – the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) – the Union Government has provided funds to State Governments for implementing rural water supply schemes.

By the 10th plan, an estimated total of Rs.1, 105 billion had been spent on providing drinking water[1]. Yet, at around the same time 2.17 lakh habitations had water quality problems and did not have a safe drinking water source[2]. Hence, huge public expenditure did not necessarily lead to significant improvement in provision of safe water. Though resources are still being invested to reach uncovered habitations, older "covered" ones keeps dropping off the list intermittently[3]. Moreover, while source security was taken for granted earlier, in 1999 it too became unreliable. The joint World Bank and Government of India review of water resource management in India grimly concluded that water availability in India was "fragile and finite".

Photo Credit: Sahjeevan

Drinking and Livestock water assets created under Pani Thiye Panjo Programme in Kachchh, Gujarat

The climate change context has made such predictions more real than ever before.

The World Bank Report was a watershed in such a context. Not only did it focus on need to reform the State modus operandi in water supply, it also argued for collaborations and partnerships for increased efficiency. Moreover, successful community based water management as witnessed in Ralegaon Siddhi, Hivre Bazaar, Hebbali, et al helped to create space for an alternate water management paradigm with a focus on decentralization and application of principles of subsidiarity.

Successive policies seem to have moved in favour of such recommendations. The National Water Policy, 2002, in its section on Participatory Approach to Water Resources Management[4], articulates clearly that "Management of Water Resources... should incorporate a participatory approach; by involving not only the various Governmental agencies but also the users and other stakeholders... in various aspects of planning, design, development and management of the water resources scheme"[5]. With a commitment to meet the Millennium Development Goals (Target 7C) and halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation[6], innovative programmes and projects were recognized as need of the hour. Increasingly, the water sector opened up to non State institutions and actors. The role of the State in water provision became more facilitative than regulatory. Swajaldhara, launched on 25th December 2002 ushered in the paradigm change. There was a perceptible shift in policy from supply driven to demand driven and centralized to decentralized modes of management and implementation.

Since water is on the State List (List-III), the primary responsibility of providing drinking water facilities in the country rests with State Governments. Hence, a number of programmes modelled on the same lines as Swajaldhara have been executed at the State Level. These include the Jalanidhi Programme in Kerala, Jalswarajya Project in Maharashtra, Swajal Project in Uttarakhand et al. While most of these were possible through external funding from the World Bank, UNICEF, et al various State departments launched their own programmes financed through State budgets. This includes the Sachethana and Suvarnajala Programme aimed at providing safe water to rural populations in Karnataka and the recently launched Mazhapolima programme in Kerala.

The Approach Paper to the Eleventh Five Year Plan, clearly spells out " tackling of water quality problems in 60,000 habitations affected by arsenic, salinity, fluoride and nitrate by 2009"[7] as key goal. This implies working on a mission mode and tapping into expertise and resources that cuts across sectors. Also, civil society is increasingly playing a key role in participating in State programmes and providing valuable inputs. It is generally accepted that when taken on an equal footing, such participation helps in optimizing public expenditure.

1 Khurana, I & Sen, R (2008) Drinking water quality in rural India: Issues and approaches. Background Paper, Water Aid, New Delhi
2 Rural Water Supply & Sanitation, Eleventh Five-Year Plan, Approach Paper, DDWS, New Delhi, pp 2
3 ibid
4 National Water Policy, 2002, New Delhi, pp5, Section 12
5 ibid
6 With 1990 data as baseline
7 Rural Water Supply & Sanitation, Eleventh Five-Year Plan, Approach Paper, DDWS, New Delhi, pp

1.1 Arghyam: A Profile

Arghyam is a public charitable foundation setup with an endowment from Rohini Nilekani and working in the water sector since 2005. 'Arghyam' is a Sanskrit word meaning 'Offering'.

The mission statement of Arghyam reads:

Safe, sustainable water for all...

Specifically, Arghyam projects strive to understand and address issues of quantity, quality and access to domestic water in communities across the country. Some of the key principles which guide its efforts include the recognition of lifeline water as a basic need and also a right, decentralization, community participation and ownership, an integrated approach to managing water from source to sink, an emphasis on subsidiarity (which signifies local management) and the effective use of technology as enabler.

Arghyam works through a combination of project grants to grass roots organizations, knowledge building and sharing through the India Water Portal, promoting new models of water science, technology and system design, participatory action research and advocacy.

As a small funding agency, Arghyam works primarily through partnerships – with Government, NGOs and various types of institutions – for impact and scale. Arghyam now collaborates with a diverse range of actors across 17 States in India through more than 60 projects. Rigorous engagement with people and institutions has helped in deepening the internal debate and keeping Arghyam closely connected to the ground.

Photo Credit: Sahjeevan

Rainwater harvesting structures double up as livestock water points under the Pani Thiye Panjo Programme Kachchh, Gujarat

1.2 Why Participate in Government Programmes?

Safe, sustainable water for all implies quality and scale. During early years, Arghyam supported grassroots organizations in implementing sustainable WATSAN projects. However, it was soon understood that though such projects made a difference to peoples lives, it could reach only a limited number. Given that 170 million Indians don't have access to safe water and only 30% of the total population have toilets, the speed, scope and scale of service delivery and its sustainability issues needed urgent attention. Also, key learnings from smaller projects had potential to add value to implementation of large Government programmes. As such thoughts crystallized, Arghyam started engaging more and more with existing Government programmes with the intent of making public investment work. The fact that there is an absence of a comprehensive institutional framework to make civil society work with Government in water and sanitation issues made it challenging. Opportunities were also rare to come by.

However, Arghyam made serious attempts over the past few years to participate or partner in Government programmes. The modalities of each collaboration varied. While participation is defined as collaboration through partner institutions, partnership signified a direct collaboration with a Government institution, recognized through clearly defined and acknowledged roles in formal agreements. Hence while *Mazhapolima* is viewed as partnership, *Sachethana* and *Pani Thiye Panjo* denote participation. *Suvarnajala* is also viewed as participation attempted through formal dialogues and processes.

Learning was a mutual process. Such collaborations allowed interaction with experienced Government staff and highlighted their technical competencies. Arghyam and its NGO partners brought on board skill set such as technological applications, communication, consensus building, innovation, etc. When such competencies started leveraging on each other, the success validated the power of such partnerships.

Photo Credit: Manoj Dabas

Hansa Bai, ex Sarpanch Karamta village, Abdasa Taluka, Kachchh next to a dug well constructed under the Pani Thiye Panjo project

Children playing next to a roof top rain water harvesting tank, in the fluoride affected Pavagada Taluka, Tumkur District, Karnataka

Photo Credit: BIRD-K

1.3 Arghyam Participation in Government Programmes: A Profile

Arghyam, since its inception has been actively participating in State Government programmes for gap filling support and making strategic funding. Within a short period these interventions have matured, and transformed from participation to partnership.

Name of Programme	Year	Region	Partner Institution	Issue (water quality/ quantity)	Scale of Work	Type of physical intervention	Total Funding by State (in Rs Lakh)	Total Funding from Arghyam (in Rs Lakh)
Suvarnajala	2005	Karnataka	RDPR & Nirmiti Kendra	Dearth of good quality drinking water and sanitation facilities in primary and middle schools in rural Karnataka	23,000 schools in 28 districts of Karnataka	Rooftop RWH	7400	40.7 (approx) for covering 3491 schools
Sachethana	2006	Karnataka	RDPR	Fluoride contamination of drinking water sources in rural Karnataka	64 fluoride affected villages in 3 districts of Karnataka	Rooftop RWH, Artificial Catchment RWH, Groundwater recharge, Direct aquifer recharge, Training & awareness	1525	58.9
Pani Thiye Panjo	2006	Gujarat	WASMO, Govt of Gujarat	Scarcity of drinking water and poor water quality	135 villages in Abdasa Taluka in Kachchh district	Well recharge, Rooftop RWH and traditional water harvesting, Public stand posts	141 for 35 villages (as of March 2009)	142 for 79 villages (approx)
Mazha Polima	2009	Kerala	Office of the District Collector, Thrissur	Drying of openwell in summer & Contamination of well water	100 Gram Panchayats	Open well recharge	1354	58.74

Primary School students with their teacher monitoring water levels in the school's roof top rainwater harvesting tank in Jadegondanahalli village in Chitradurga District. The RTRWH system was constructed under Suvarnajala

Photo Credit: Gauri Tikota

1.3.1 Suvarnajala

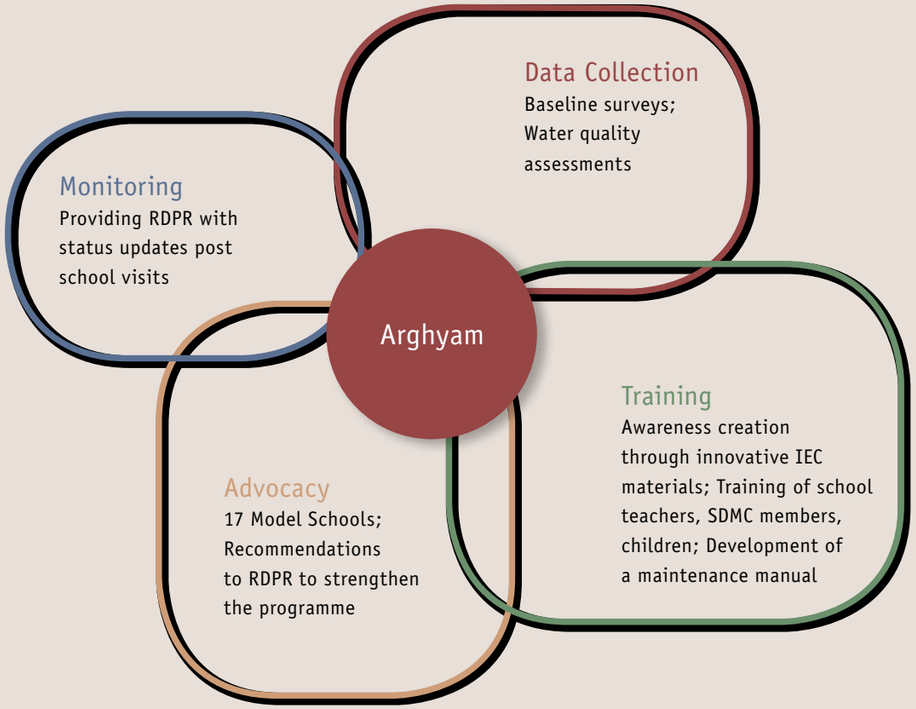
Area:	Karnataka
Districts:	Raichur, Mysore, Chamrajnagar, Chitradurga, Davangere, Dharwad, Tumkur and Gadag
Project:	Drinking water in 23,683 Government schools
Period:	2006 – 2008
Funds support: (from Arghyam)	Rs 40.7 lakhs for covering 3491 schools

The Rural Development & Panchayati Raj Department (RDPR), Government of Karnataka (GoK) initiated a massive Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting Program called Suvarna Jala[8], in 2005. The agenda was to provide safe drinking water for children in about 23,683 Government run schools across rural Karnataka where there was either scarcity of drinking water or presence of excess fluoride. The aim was to provide 1.5 litres of safe water per student per day. The funds for the programme were routed from Bharat Nirman allocations for the State of the Karnataka. Suvarnajala was flagged off in the year 2006. However it was soon realized that there were severe inadequacies in the way the programme was being implemented. There was minimal ownership over constructed assets; they were falling into disuse. The service delivery architecture kept school committees out of its purview. At the operational level the programme failed to invest adequate resources into institutional capacity building.

Arghyam, aware of these lacunae, decided to take part in this initiative. It realized that providing resources for gap filling would optimize public investment. Hence RDPR was approached with an offer of participation, which was accepted.

The earlier focus of RDPR on hardware activities continued as before. RDPR released funds to the Zilla Panchayat (ZP) which in turn transferred the same to District Nirmiti Kendra (or ZP Engineering Department, in case there were no Nirmiti Kendra's in that District). The Nirmiti Kendra was responsible for setting up the roof top rainwater system in each school.

8 Touted to be the biggest school roof top rainwater harvesting programme in the world



Arghyam's role in Suvarnajala was to improve the quality of the implementation of the programme in these schools. This involved facilitating a network of Rainwater Harvesting experts and grass-roots NGOs who were involved in capacity-building, evaluating and monitoring the programme.

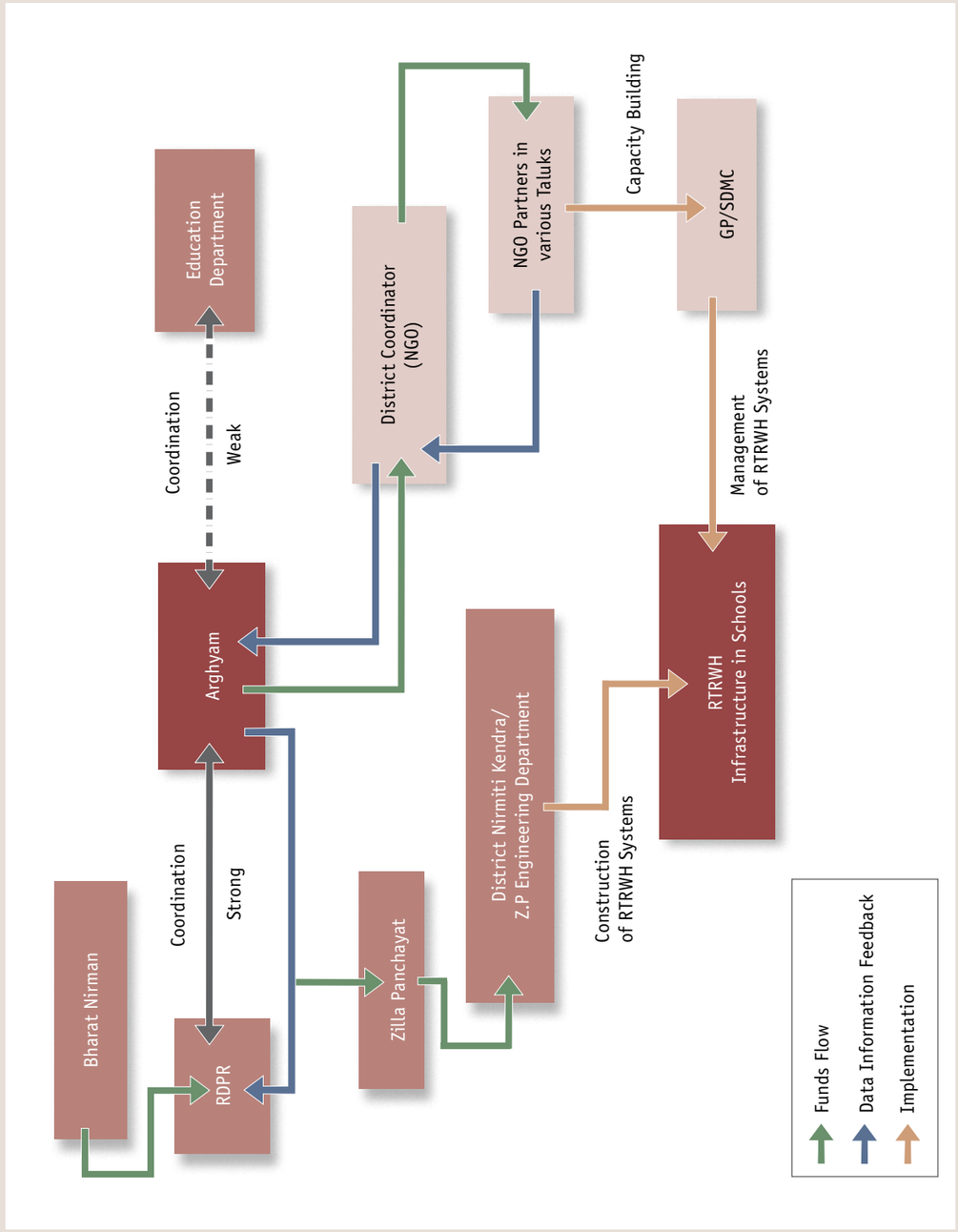
A total of 8 districts were taken up by the network which included Raichur[9], Mysore, Chamrajnagar, Chitradurga, Davangere, Dharwad, Tumkur and Gadag.

Arghyam pitched in with its resources to create a network of NGOs. The main activities of the network supported by Arghyam are depicted above.

Suvarna Jala Yojane[10] ran its course from 2005–2006 to 2007–2008. Arghyam was involved in the programme from September 2006 till March 2008.

9 However, a partner's unwillingness to take this work forward in Raichur led to its dropping off the list of Districts. This is explained later in the document.

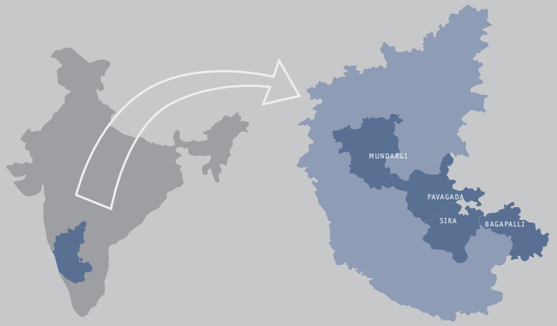
10 Programme



An aquifer recharge system constructed under the Sachetana programme in Sira Taluka, Tumkur District, Karnataka

Photo Credit: BIRD-K

1.3.2 Sachetana



Area:	Karnataka
Districts:	Gadag, Tumkur, Kolar
Project:	Drinking water sources in 64 fluoride affected villages
Period:	2006 – 2008
Fund support: (from Arghyam)	Rs 58.9 lakhs

In 1998, BAIF Institute for Rural Development, Karnataka (BIRD-K), a non profit organisation based in Tumkur District initiated a programme on fluoride mitigation through rainwater harvesting. Though generally focussed on livelihoods and watershed development issues, high fluoride content in drinking water supplies in the district and its resultant health impacts didn't escape their notice. The quantity of fluoride varied between 3 ppm[11] to 6 ppm, way above WHO prescribed limit of 1 ppm. Hence, with a small grant from International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a Canadian Research institution, they started working on fluoride mitigation by trying and testing out a number of models with 15–20 families in Mundargi taluk, Gadag district. These initiatives yielded results and managed provide relief to a large number of people in the surrounding fluoride affected region by reducing fluoride content in drinking water significantly. Bolstered by its success BIRD-K scaled up its programme with support from German Agro Action (GAA) to nine villages in Gadag District. A number of innovations apart from rainwater harvesting were tried out. This included different models on roof top rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and massive afforestation programmes. The latter was based on evidence that latex yielding species could optimally absorb fluoride from sub surface flows. Though suitable latex yielding species could not be found, the afforestation drive still continued since it would at least absorb some levels of fluoride.

The success of BIRD-K's work had generated substantial interest in State Government circles. Mr. Kaushik Mukherjee, the then Secretary RD & PR Department took keen interest in the programme and visited the project sites. Convinced that roof top rainwater harvesting was a practical and cost effective solution to fluoride contamination of drinking water, he pushed for upscaling of the pilot.

11 parts per million

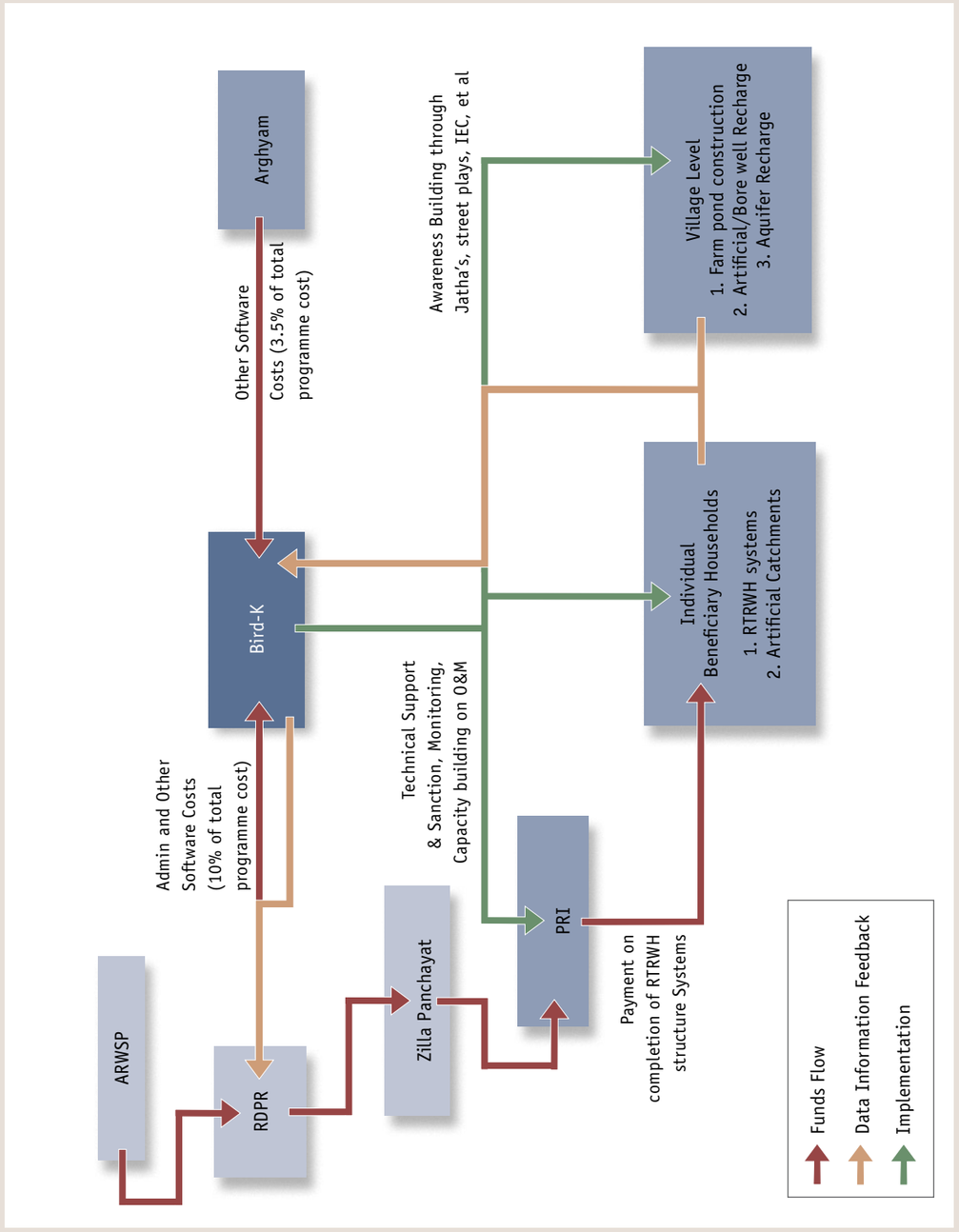
However, this took its time. The Government has by then reposed complete faith in de-fluoridation units, which in reality were not working on the ground. After a substantial gap since initial negotiations, an implementation framework for Sachethana was conceptualized. The funds for the same were sourced from Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). Sachethana envisaged working in 60 villages in 4 taluks in 3 fluoride affected districts.

The partnership model had roles and responsibilities clearly divided. While the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (RDPR) were to release funds for construction (read hardware), BIRD-K was supposed to provide technical support, ensure operations and maintenance (O&M) and community contribution. However, during negotiations with the State Government, there was increasing pressure on BIRD-K to reduce its awareness and capacity building costs (read software). BIRD-K was aware that downsizing software activities would comprise the impact and acceptance of the programme. At this point of time, Arghyam stepped in with support for such costs which were to be incurred by BIRD-K.

As depicted on the facing page, hardware funds were directly released by the RDPR to the Zilla Panchayat which passed down to the Panchayats (on the basis of estimates provided by the Panchayats) in each village where the programme was being executed. The software costs of BIRD-K were funded directly through the Dept. of RDPR. The balance/ gap amount was provided by Arghyam through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with BIRD-K. As a technical expert in the programme, BIRD-K provided technical support to PRI's and supervised progress of construction and also trained communities on O&M components. The support from Arghyam helped BIRD-K to organize a number of awareness programmes on need for roof top rainwater harvesting and other methods of tackling fluoride contamination and also in monitoring the impact of the project.

Sachethana started in 2006 and is slated to continue till 2010. Arghyam support to Sachethana will also continue till 2010. The project will provide clean drinking water to approximately 60,000 people in 64 fluoride affected villages in 3 districts of Karnataka.

Photo Credit: BIRD-K



Key Interventions under Sachethana Fluoride Mitigation Programme

Recharge of existing
40 borewell Rs 20,000 per well

Rooftop rainwater harvesting
5000 litres (Rs 22,067 per hh)

Dilution of underground
aquifer by recharging;
20 dilutionwells @ Rs 2.45 lakh per well
(community contribution 3%)

Artificial catchment for RW
harvest (Rs 22500 per hh)

Farm ponds for groundwater recharge;
2400 ponds @ Rs 6000
(Community contribution 25%)

All Photos here are provided by BIRD-K

1.3.3 Pani Thiye Panjo

Area:	Gujarat
Districts:	Abdasa, Kutchchh
Project:	Development of sustainable water resources at village level
Period:	2007 – 2009
Fund support: (from Arghyam)	Rs 142 lakhs for 79 villages

"Pani thiye panjo", (loosely translated from Kachhchi means 'lets this water be ours!') is a multi institutional programme that attempts to address issues of water scarcity through local source augmentation in Abdasa taluka[12], Kachchh district, Gujarat. The immediate aim is to ensure adequate[13], safe drinking water[14] access[15] to 80% of the population of the taluka (135 out of 166 villages) through development of sustainable water resources at village level over a period of 5 years. This will ideally transform local sources into primary ones with the external sources as backup.

The project was conceived by Sahjeevan, an NGO based in Bhuj, Kachchh and is being implemented by a group of NGOs, namely Vivekanand Research and Training Institute (VRTI), Kutch Fodder Fruit & Forest Trust (KFFFT), Manav Kalyan Trust (MKT) and Abdasa Mahila Vikas Sangathan (AMVS). In a classic example of community-public & civil society partnership, WASMO (Water and Sanitation Management Organisation), an autonomous organisation established by the Government of Gujarat in 2002, joined hands and committed funds to support the hardware costs (also some administrative ones) involved in programme implementation.

The programme is embedded in a collaborative institutional framework that pools in financial resources from the State and Private Institutions and decentralized knowledge management frameworks from CSO's.

Women collect drinking water from a shallow dugwell constructed under the Pani Thiye Panjo Programme in Abdasaa Taluka, Kachchh, Gujarat

Photo Credit: Sahjeevan

12 Generally, a tehsil consists of a city or town that serves as its headquarters, possibly additional towns, and a number of villages. As an entity of local government, it exercises certain fiscal and administrative power over the villages and municipalities within its jurisdiction. It is the ultimate executive agency for land records and related administrative matters. Its chief official is called the tehsildar or talukdar

13 70 liter per person per day

14 The quality parameters will concomitant to WHO standards, http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/dwq/guidelines/en/

15 'Access' is defined as a distance of not more than 200m from individual households

The programme is anchored in communitarian processes. Pani Samitis, a subgroup of the village Panchayat[16] (i.e. Village Water Management Committees) facilitated by implementing NGOs, prepares a project proposal, the quality of which is assessed by ACT[17]. The final proposal is submitted to WASMO, which extends support through hardware financing.

Arghyam provides financial assistance to cover all soft costs of implementing NGOs. Sahjeevan being the nodal agency coordinates activities of the consortium. The architecture of this collaboration is illustrated on top.

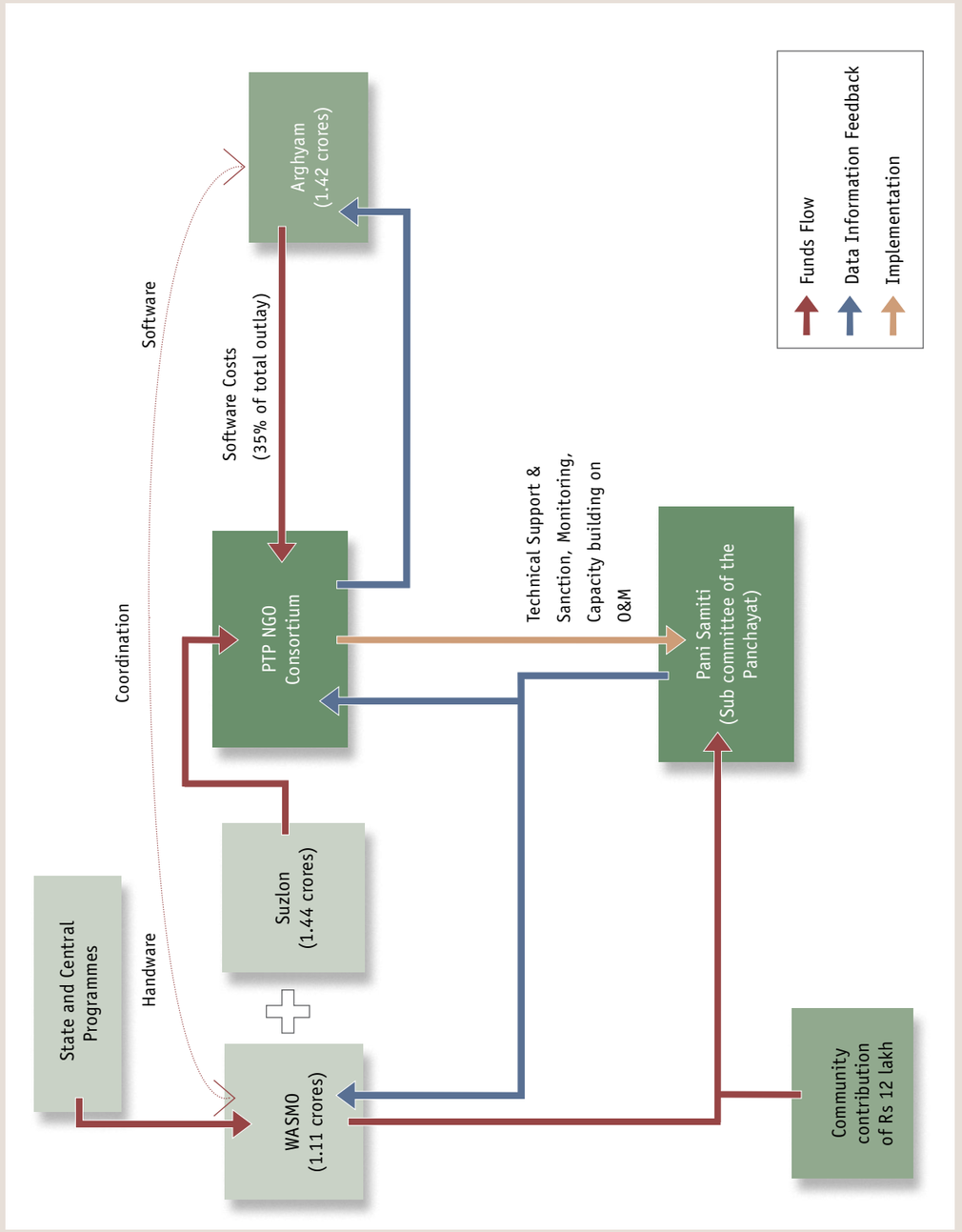
The work profile was clearly divided between various actors. WASMO has been directly working with Pani Samiti's in each village. Technical proposals/village plans prepared by the Pani Samiti's were approved by WASMO provided they satisfied set criteria. The funds for implementing the plan were disbursed directly to the Pani Samiti's. However, Pani Samiti's had capacity constraints and the technical feasibility of their proposals needed attention. Hence, PTP consortium worked on strengthening Pani Samiti's in different villages to prepare technical plans. In this they developed an innovative mechanism called Parabs. Parabs are local youth who were trained by the PTP consortium on basic geo-hydrology and water resource planning. They became barefoot engineers on whom Pani Samitis could bank upon for technical guidance. Approximately 30 technical proposals prepared by Pani Samitis with assistance from Parabs were sanctioned without any additional queries, making it a success story by itself. Apart from strengthening Pani Samitis the PTP consortium worked on a number of outreach and training programmes cutting across different stake holder groups.

By the end of 2009, the programme had reached 79 villages, created 10 barefoot engineers, revived 54 dug wells and 26 ponds benefitting approximately 70,000 villagers in the water scarce regions of Kachchh.

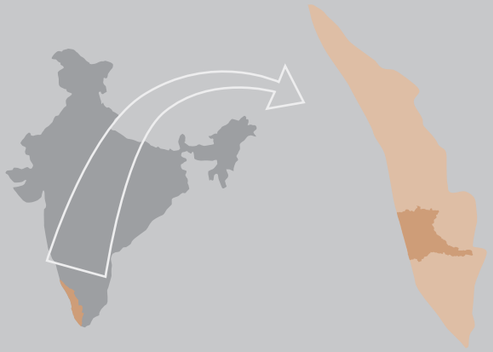
Photo Credit: Sahjeevan

16 Village level constitutionally approved (73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution) governance and administrative units

17 Arid Community and Technologies, an NGO with expertise in geo hydrology



1.3.4 Mazhapolima



Area:	Kerala
Districts:	Trissur
Project:	Recharge all open wells to ensure sustainable access to water
Period:	2009 – 2011
Fund support: (from Arghyam)	Rs 58 lakhs for two years

When translated from Malayalam Mazhapolima means “bounty of rain”. It’s a community based and decentralized well recharge programme, initiated by the Thrissur district administration in collaboration with the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the District. The idea of this programme was seeded by Dr. V Kurien Baby, the energetic District Collector of Thrissur. Realizing that reducing groundwater tables and salinity ingress was pushing Thrissur towards an impending drinking water crisis, he conceptualized a programme to recharge all open wells in the district. This process driven, participatory programme would reduce dependence on a tanker supply based water regime and promote local management of water.

Given that revival of approximately 4.5 lakh open wells would require expertise and handholding, a Mazhapolima Monitoring and Coordination Unit (MMCU) was created. This monitoring unit would provide expertise and support for data based decision making. Through informal networks Arghyam and Districts Collectors office discussed this programme and a collaborative agenda was worked out. Arghyam pitched in to support the MMCU to generate data and strengthen the research component of the programme. Through Arghyam’s support documentation of social and scientific processes critical to the programme was ensured.

Mazhapolima has helped recharge 2,536 wells in Thrissur district already and is on its way to becoming a successful example of decentralized water management at an impressive scale.

A well recharge system in place in a household in Thrissur District, Kerala promoted under the Mazhapolima Programme

Photo Credit: Mazhapolima Team

The key objectives of the programme are

(i) to recharge ground water by feeding rainwater into the open wells, ponds and bore wells

(ii) to evolve multiple models and technologies in water and sanitation through participatory action research

(iii) to improve drinking water availability and service levels across the year, (Focus on sanitized water and water sources after creating a water resource base)

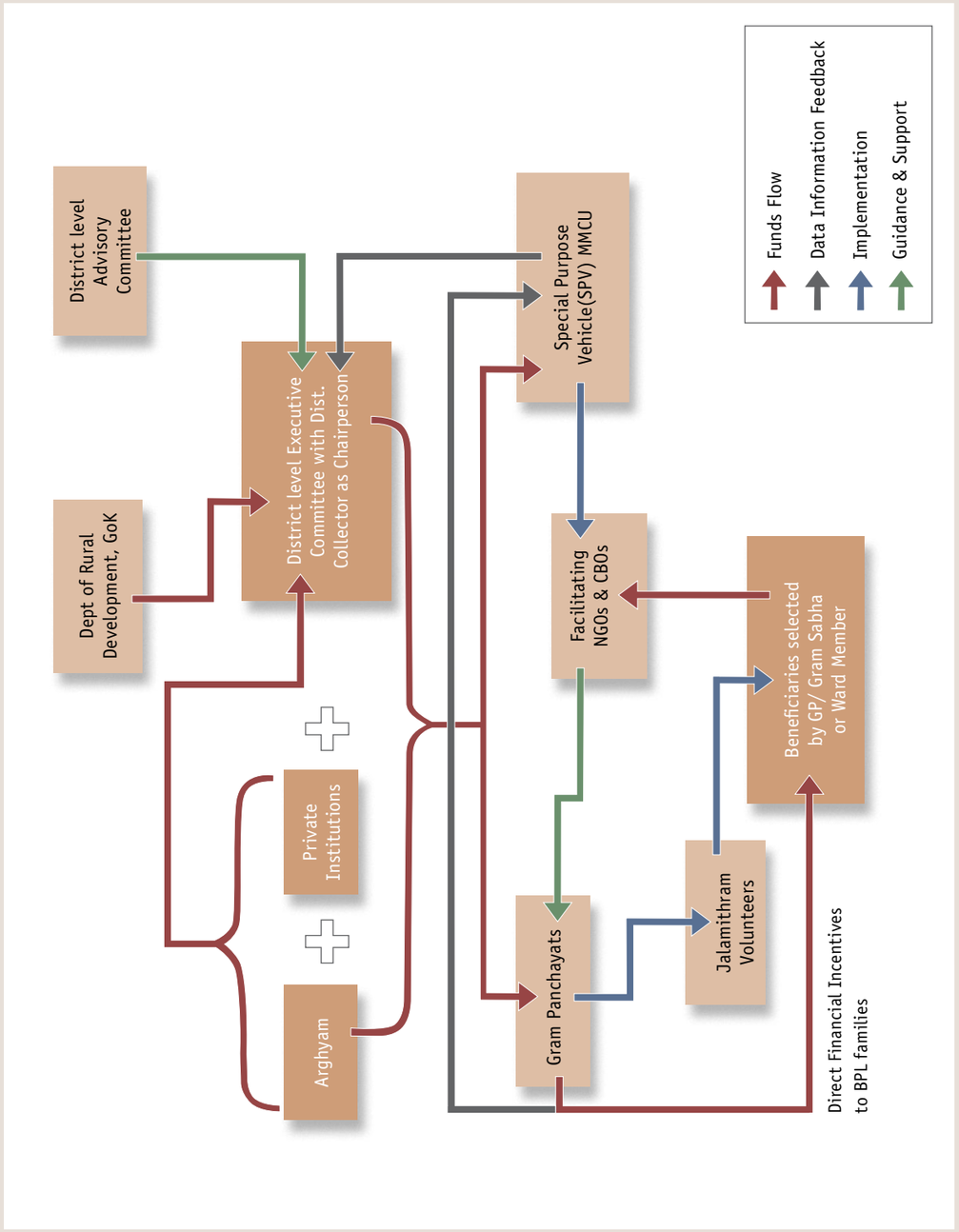
(iv) to evolve through action research an alternative sanitation model for the coastal and other densely populated areas of the district

(v) to significantly reduce the impact of drought and consequent public spending on supply of drinking water in tankers to the water stressed regions in the district

(vi) to create a data base regarding local water resource base and user behaviour and make efforts to standardize the data base for wider application and research

Protection of dug wells from contamination in Mazhapolima programme sites in Thrissur

Photo Credit: Mazhapolima Team



2 Learning from Partnership

2.1 Why collaborate?

Collaboration that involves a number of stakeholders is not necessarily hinged on common interest. Each stakeholder has particular reasons for collaboration. Hence the success of such an exercise is largely dependant on how long each interest is sustained in the programme. The following figure charts out the various reasons why participation and collaboration in various Government schemes became possible.

Following conclusions can be traced out:

> Arghyam participated in all of the above mentioned programmes in an effort to achieve scale, support innovation and make its limited financial resources more effective by optimizing public investments. The other driver for participation was to learn from such exercises.

> Partner institutions largely collaborated as they were looking for solutions to local drinking water issues and were convinced that their models/idea were innovative and sustainable. Though they also wanted to scale up their success, the primary driver was to get its models recognized by the Government for upscaling.

> Government institutions, except for Mazha Polima, were not directly in a partnership with Arghyam. Their reason to collaborate with Civil Society stemmed from earlier on the grounds success which had the potential to be taken to scale. Majority of the collaborations where driven by individuals who saw merit in such partnerships.

	Arghyam	Partner Institution	Government Institution
Suvarnajala	> It was the world's largest school roof top rainwater harvesting programme and meaningful participation in it would help Arghyam reach a huge constituency and also gain valuable learnings > Suvarnajala also offered an opportunity for convergence between Pratham, Akshara which were education related initiatives with Arghyam, which was focussed on the water sector	> Opportunity to work in the area of Water & Sanitation. This was a new area for most of the partner institutions and there was interest to understand the issue > Opportunity to partner with Arghyam and possibility of developing long term partnership	> This programme was largely developed by a few key individuals in the State Government machinery. These dynamic individuals wanted this programme to be a success. Hence they welcomed participation from Civil Society to make implementation of Suvarnajala more robust
Sachethana	> Opportunity to provide gap funding on software to a programme whose success has been established in providing safe drinking water in fluoride affected areas > This programme also offered a fantastic scaling up opportunity	> Had showcased the success of its approach in rainwater harvesting for fluorosis mitigation earlier, hence it was an opportunity to upscale its earlier successes > Though State Government provided hardware support, software support was meagre, a partnership with Arghyam and RDPR ensured balance in activities related to both	> Key actors in the State bureaucracy were aware of the earlier success and wanted to upscale it
Pani Thiye Panjo	> Convinced that this programme was a innovative attempt at ensuring drinking water scarcity in semi arid areas > Offered an opportunity to partner with a large number of reputed institutions in a State known for proactive governance and service delivery and achieve scale	> The concept of decentralized drinking water supply was a unique one and the organization wanted to showcase the project at National level > The organisation felt that this programme would help establish Sahjeevan at the forefront of innovative solutions to drinking water scarcity issues in Kachchh	> The Govt. body saw the possibility of sustaining its hardware interventions through involvement of civil society actors and private donor institutions
Mazhapolima	> Ground water was a thematic area, and under this programme, a direct partnership with the Government on groundwater issues could be orchestrated > It was an opportunity to provide valuable inputs to a Government programme based on Arghyam and its partners experience in geo hydrology and ground water management > Unlike earlier, this provided a direct collaboration opportunity, where Arghyam was recognized officially as a partner	Photo Credit: Mazhapolima Team	> A District Collector who was committed to trying out a PPP initiative to address local drinking water issues > This programme required gap funding from external sources so that software components didn't lose out > Better monitoring is ensured with the presence of a donor who has keen interest

Women carrying potable water from a local dug well in a village in Abdasa Taluka, Kachchh, Gujarat

Photo Credit: Sahjeevan

2.2 Mapping Influence

In all the projects[18] each actor influenced the other's behaviour as the collaboration progressed. Influence also varied with positions of power in a partnership. The level of influence correlated with clarity of roles and responsibilities in a partnership and the value that each institution brought to the table. Once there was perceived value in collaboration from Civil Society, the State was more amenable to be influenced in the partnership. Interestingly, it was discovered that there was positive influences of the Government on NGO's as well. Hence, there are examples in Pani Thiye Panjo where both the WASMO and Arghyam exerted influence on Sahjeevan to increase the speed of implementation, while Sahjeevan and Arghyam prevailed on WASMO to speed up funds release for hardware.

In many cases, it was noted that Arghyam's influence on partner NGOs was also substantial, be it in bringing geo hydrology to BIRD-K in Sachethana or opening up school WATSAN as a new focus area for its eight partners in Suvarnajala. Arghyam also provided key resources such as digital cameras to partner organisation in Suvarnajala which was useful in documenting progress and issues in constructing roof top rainwater harvesting systems in schools. Though a seemingly simple act, it added teeth to advocacy efforts with RDPR when such photos were shown to key Government functionaries and facilitated mid course correction.

The abovementioned influences worked in a universe of drivers, incentives and disincentives. Hence, each instance of influence has to be measured against the driver and what that influence actually meant for the collaboration. The Table (folowing pages) is a matrix that traces each instance of influence, the driver for the same and its impact across Suvarnajala, Sachethana and Pani Thiye Panjo. This exercise helps to map out drivers for influence and change.

A summary of the learnings on the same provided below:

1. Getting support to upscale a concept through Government or Donor Support requires workable models on the ground. While donor institutions do take the risk to support implementation of innovative ideas/concepts, Governments rarely do the same. Hence, for influencing the State to enter into a partnership, a working model is essential

2. Influencing Government decisions while participating in a Government programme requires regular communication and outreach. Hence a platform for experience sharing during project implementation is critical. Success of a project depends on how well this platform is formalized and embedded in the collaboration architecture and the level of seriousness with which suggestions originating from the same is taken and acted upon

18 Except perhaps for Mazha Polima, where the partnership is in its nascent stage

3. Success stories when physically verified by key Government functionaries exert stronger influence on policy. Hence advocacy and communication efforts should push policy makers to visit model project sites

4. First impressions are critical for influencing policy makers, especially in Government & Civil Society collaboration. If the initial phases of the project are successful, it creates an enabling environment for further negotiation and support

5. What begins with influencing key individuals in the system should quickly be replicated across institutional hierarchies. Collaboration based on individual interest from the Government may not be sustainable. Hence, access allowed by influential Government officials should be optimized to build relationship across line departments and lower rung staff

6. The scope of influence is directly proportional to the perceived value of civil society organisations in the partnership. NGO's/Civil Society Initiatives have very little influencing power unless their collaboration adds significant value to public investment and mechanisms for service delivery. In all three project sites, NGOs who have established their UniqueSelling Point (USP) have influenced Government policy and action significantly

Incidentally, the analysis of all three projects shows that the Government also exercises significant influence on the functioning of the NGOs. An Influence Driver Matrix on the facing page validates the abovementioned learnings providing suitable examples for each.

Students standing next to a roof top rainwater harvesting tank constructed under the Suvarnajala Programme

Photo Credit: Suvarnajala Team

Suvarnajala

Nature of Influence	Drivers / Innovation	Results
Established the importance of data-based decision making and presented a detailed picture of ground realities	Developed standardized and structured questionnaires that enabled statistical outputs. Also, baseline & construction survey of every school was conducted. This was followed with water quality monitoring and the data and statistical outputs were presented to RDPR. All this helped showcase the need to concentrate on capacity building and awareness building.	Earlier RDPR only trained Nirmiti Kendra engineers. The results of the survey prioritised the need to train the user community. Hence RDPR hosted training programmes for SDMC/HMs in the remaining 20 districts Construction survey convinced RDPR to repair defunct systems
Established the importance of software activities	Documentation, awareness building & training through IEC. IEC included innovative tools developed by Arghyam, such as a pocket calendar with maintenance instructions for school teachers and a maintenance manual produced by RDPR but content provided by Arghyam & Partners	Government organized training to SDMC/HMs in the remaining 20 odd districts
Established the power of agglomeration in tapping expertise across institutions	This was achieved through managing a NGO consortium that had expertise ranging from geo hydrology to community mobilization. They suggested various other methods of drinking water provision is schools thorough presentations in meetings with Government functionaries	Their engagement convinced the State to consider other options apart from roof top rainwater harvesting for providing safe drinking water in schools in the next phase

Sachethana

Nature of Influence	Drivers / Innovation	Results
Convinced the State that Rainwater Harvesting was a more viable option than energy and cost intensive de-fluoridation units	Established success stories on the ground in 9 villages and communicating the same to key Government functionaries through exposure visits and presentations Used geohydrological data and information on amount of rainwater harvested to confidently articulate the positives of rtrwh	The Government of Karnataka decided to work with BIRD-K and upscale their earlier success across 3 fluoride affected districts in Karnataka through State funding
Convinced the Government to recognize BIRD-K as a technically competent authority to sanction Panchayat plans and also as joint signatory to release of funds to beneficiaries	This was largely due to BIRD-K's earlier success demonstrated through a number of pilots. This had already established their technical competency. This helped during their negotiations with RDPR when they insisted on being recognized as technical experts	The project was free of bureaucratic delays and corruption over sanctioning of plans
Convinced the Government machinery that without adequate software support, scaling up of Sachethana success was impossible	Arghyam support in Sachethana Plus was crucial, especially for using jaatha's at the village level for awareness generation. The demand generation drive was so successful that it outstripped BIRD-K's capacity to supply	RDPR wants to expand Sachethana to Koppal District and is willing to support related software costs as well

Village awareness meeting on Pani Thiye Panjo programme taking place in Nimrivandh village, Abdasa Taluka, Kachchh District

Photo Credit: Sahjeevan

Pani Thiye Panjo

Nature of Influence	Drivers / Innovation	Results
Demonstrated the feasibility of local source development and decentralized drinking water management to the State	Innovations in planning, such as the use of geo hydrology to prepare village based aquifer maps. Such mapping at a substantial scale convinced WASMO of the technical feasibility of the intervention. It also empowered Pani Samiti's as they had a visual understanding of groundwater characteristics and availability	Was successful in prevailing on WASMO to support PTP based on the concept in 114 villages in Kachchh district
Convinced WASMO that Parab's (barefoot engineers) were capable village level water resource planners	Good technical reports from Pani Samitis and the role of barefoot engineers in preparing geo hydrological maps for Abdasa Taluka	30 Technical plans submitted by Pani Samitis with assistance from Parabs stand officially recognized. Most of the para engineers are local youth with education up to high school. This is a recognition of their capacity and a reflection on the training that they have been provided with

2.3 Adding Value to Government Programmes

One of the most significant learning from assessing drivers for policy and action in Government programmes was that value adds from civil society participation really mattered. In every project, either Arghyam or its partners (in some cases both together) have generated value by its participation in execution of a Government programme. These value adds have been either through innovations in technology or in processes. Often these value adds have also functioned as drivers of change and influence. These specific instances have been captured in the following table:

	Type of value added	Nature of value added	Impacts of value added
Suvarnajala	Technological	MIS for data based decision making. Also conducted Baseline & Construction Surveys in 8 districts & regularly presented analysis of such data to RDPR. Regular liaison with RDPR and update on status of implementation	There was lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities between RDPR & RGRHCL. When Arghyam brought this to the notice of RDPR based on its construction survey it was sorted out via direct official communication between the two departments Evidence based feedback on the design of the programme enabled mid course correction. Use of digital tools to provide a clear picture of ground situation aided the above mentioned process
	Communication	Maintenance Manual, Training modules and an innovative pocket calendar in Kannada that had visual and written guidelines on managing a roof top rainwater harvesting system	Helped SDMC and school teachers to understand management requirements and was used extensively in model schools
	Technological	Use of digital cameras to document status of roof top rainwater harvesting structures	Technical problems with implementation clearly identified and presented to RDPR. A meeting of Nirmiti Kendra heads was called and they were asked to repair the damaged structures

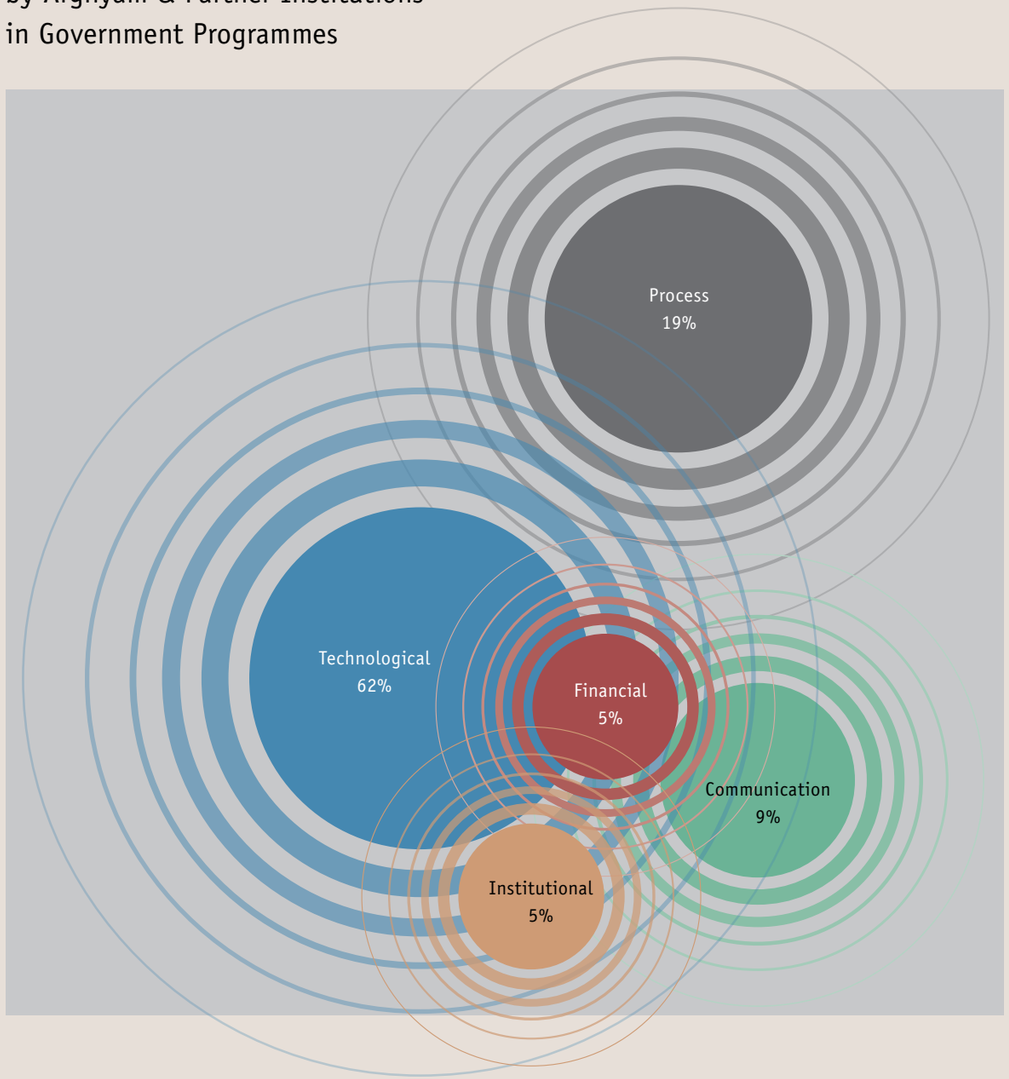
	Type of value added	Nature of value added	Impacts of value added
Sachethana	Technological	Introduced Geo-Hydrology as a tool for effective rain water harvesting and recharging groundwater reserves	Earlier groundwater (borewell) recharge was largely based on perception. After being trained in geo hydrology, the BIRD-K staff gained greater confidence and insight and recharge mechanisms were carried out satisfactorily
	Process / Financial	Urged BIRD-K to set up revolving funds for roof top rainwater harvesting and route it through SHG's	Delay in fund release from the Government was a huge bottleneck. Through the revolving fund, households could easily avail of funds for construction instead of waiting for sanction and release of funds from RDPR to Panchayat and Panchayat to the beneficiary. Hence, it offset the delay in project implementation substantially
	Communication	Support BIRD-K to take out jaatha's and organize street plays in an effort to create awareness on fluoride in drinking water and need for redress	Considered as one of the critical factors that made Sachatena a success. Without support for these components, demand generated for roof top rainwater harvesting would not have been significant
	Technological	Coated mud roofs with white lime to adapt them for water collection. Also use of waterproofing paint on asbestos cement (a/c) sheets to convert mud roofs into catchment areas	A simple solution that enabled reaching out to poorer households and debunking the concept that only concrete roofs could be used for roof top rainwater harvesting
	Technological	H_2S strip test was an excellent tool that communicated water quality issues to beneficiary populations	Increased awareness considerably on water quality and need to protect drinking water from contamination. Post H_2S Strip tests beneficiaries took exceptionally good care of roof top rainwater harvesting systems. It is validated by the fact that 83% of the households using H_2S strip test bottles reported clean bacteria free water in their tanks.
	Technological	You tube Videos, extensively used to capture various facets of the project for an external audience	13, 168 cumulative hits and running. Has acted as a great dissemination tool at both National and International Level

	Type of value added	Nature of value added	Impacts of value added
	Institutional	BIRD-K recognized as a competent authority to provide technical sanctions to village plans	Removed ZP out of the picture in terms of implementation and allowed BIRD-K a free hand in taking the project forward
	Process	Training of mason's and developing skills at the local level	Earlier no skilled masons were available to take the work forward. Post project and training a dedicated cadre of trained masons are now operational in the area. This allowed the team to meet the continuous demand for rtrwh
	Process	BIRD-K and Panchayats are co signatories on cheques being issued to beneficiaries to reimburse their cost of construction	Kept the financial process clean and corruption free
	Technological	Locating the sump tank inside the house of the beneficiary	Ensured improved quality control and easier access for women at the household level. Wastage was also reduced
	Technological	Removing the valve for the first flush	Earlier, the valve often used to get jammed, and inability to open it meant the first flush actually entering the rainwater storage chamber. Replacing the valve with an automatic mechanism that allowed only good quality rain water to enter the tank, the safety of drinking water was ensured. It also made it easier for women as they found the valve difficult to operate as at times excessive force was required to operate the same
	Technological	Simple device to read water table in the rainwater storage tank	Helped the beneficiary to figure out exactly how much of water was being stored so that he/she could prioritize its use
Pani Thiye Panjo	Process	Training of Parab's, a dedicated cadre of barefoot engineers at the village level	Considered one of the major success stories of the PTP programme. Parab's went on to support Pani Samiti's and help them prepare technical sanctions. As of now 30 Technical plans submitted by Pani Samiti's with assistance from Parab's stand officially recognized Technical Sanctions were earlier in the domain of the executive engineers of Gujarat Water Supply and Sanitation Board (GWSSB). There were serious delays in getting them approved. Parab's are hence providing tremendous value add in speeding up implementation

	Type of value added	Nature of value added	Impacts of value added
Pani Thiye Panjo	Technological	Geo-hydrology as the basis of Water resource Planning	Developed a typology for villages with good, poor, bad and very bad water situation and clearly mapped which intervention would be optimal in which geological terrain. Used extensively by Parabs and Pani Samiti's for developing village level plans
	Technological	Integration of solar pumping and drinking water distribution through pipeline	In the village of Karamta, it helped in getting piped water straight at the heart of the village, hence reducing time for women to collect water from a virda a kilometre away
	Technological	Shallow large diameter well (belonging to the virda family)	Essentially it is upgrading the virda by lining it with rocks and cement so that the water source doesn't get clogged up with sand and loose earth. This has always been a management issue with virdas
	Financial	Advocating for lower tariffs for water procured from local sources as compared to external ones	Helped demonstrate that local source development meant cheaper and more reliable water supply as compared to piped water being supplied by GWSSB
	Technological	Low cost Filter wells	Actually a recharge cum production well made with local materials that filter water entering a well from a nearby recharge source. As of now it is providing a low cost drinking water solution to 4 villages in PTP
	Communication	Community Radio that promoted conservation and use of ecentralized drinking water systems	9 Episodes were broadcast till elections May 2009. As feedback it received 262 phone calls and 28 letters. 15 more such programmes are slated to be broadcasted in 2009 – 2010

In a snapshot, one can easily club the various innovations introduced by Arghyam and its partner institutions. As shown below, innovations in such collaborations have largely gravitated towards the technological, which commands a significant 61% of total innovations introduced. Of the rest Process and Communication and Outreach related innovations occupy second and third places respectively.

Types of Innovation introduced by Arghyam & Partner Institutions in Government Programmes



Across three projects, the following key learnings on value add to Government programmes can be summarized as:

a. Technical innovations to **enhance efficiency** of drinking water supply and storage **assets** seem to be the biggest value addition to Government programmes. Innovations in this domain also **generate quick buy in** and consequent support for such programmes, especially those initiated by civil society

b. There is clear advantage of **pursuing multipronged strategies** instead of **one type fits all**[19]. Such allows greater flexibility to adapt to local contexts of demand and capacity

c. The biggest value add to Civil Society in a collaboration with the Government is **resilience and innovation**. Many of the technological and process oriented innovations originate **when the programme hits a roadblock due to bureaucratic limitations**

d. **Technological innovations** which are **gender sensitive** add significant value as their **immediate uptake** is ensured at the household level[20]

e. Instead of looking for brand new technology to address water quality/quantity issues, **simple value adds to existing systems** are **more cost effective** and more **acceptable** at the local level[21]

f. **Developing local skill base** to manage public and private assets has been a successful investment for Civil Society and **added value to public investment** by ensuring proper local planning, operations and maintenance

g. To add value to a Government programme, **innovations that sustain public investment need to be cost effective for the beneficiary**. Otherwise its shelf life reduces. But at the same time **costs are directly proportional to the number of technological value adds** being introduced[22]

h. Ensuring the **success of assets** means making its **management processes simpler**. This is an area where Civil Society can add significant value to Government programmes[23]

i. IT tools can add value by **disseminating project stories to a larger audience**[24], however, outreach through local newspapers and journals helps in generating interest at the appropriate level

j. **Donor institutions** should **invest in developing capacities of NGOs** working in Government programmes. This adds value as it **enhances their ability to articulate issues more confidently to the Government**[25]

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19 This was the key difference between the success of PTP vis a vis Suvarnajala. PTP experimented with different innovations and management systems to fit local capacities and geophysical contexts

20 Both in Sachethana and PTP, where innovations made accessing drinking water easier for women

21 Example of wells in PTP, where virda's where made permanent

22 The classic example is that of the filter in Sachethana, which now costs 3500 with a number of upgrades, affecting its upscaling

23 Innovations in roof top rainwater harvesting in Sachethana is case in point

24 Youtube videos on Sachethana project

25 Geo hydrological trainings for Sachethana staff

3 Reflections and Ways Ahead

Pursuing collaboration in a universe of unequal relationships requires strategy and gumption. The experience of participating/partnering in Government programmes shows that the onus of adding value and proving their worth lies completely with NGOs. In a policy vacuum, NGOs and other Civil Society institutions will have to continuously reinvent their roles and responsibilities and resort to cost effective innovations.

It is also clear that the role of NGO's has changed considerably in an era where decentralization and direct funds transfer to communities from the State has made implementing NGOs redundant on the scale issue. Moreover donor communities are increasingly shying away from investment in hardware components and asking NGOs to leverage funds from Government programmes. It is evident that this will reconfigure State and Civil Society relations in the coming years.

Safe and sustainable water for all sets the scale of Arghyam's work. This implies that the search for the most imaginative and efficient use of public investment will continue.

Participating in Government programmes has resulted in mixed experiences. In Suvarnajala, there was a serious engagement from Arghyam and its partners to make the world's largest school roof top rainwater harvesting programmes a success. However, interest from the Government to partner and learn was manifest only through individual interest. To convert such individual interest into an institutional one, even for just one programme, required Herculean advocacy and lobbying. Since bandwidth constraints limited this kind of engagement, the simple transfer of the key Government employee led to complete collapse. Attempts at resuscitating the programme through proper staff allocations at Arghyam's end also proved unsuccessful. However, there were a number of learnings for both NGOs and Arghyam and some of them trickled down to successive programmes such as Sachethana.

Sachethana however showcased how strong presence of an NGO can redesign relationships with a Government Department. A number of modifications in bureaucratic procedures were made to facilitate this partnership and the gap filling support provided by Arghyam proved critical. At this point of time Arghyam started to add value to such partnerships by facilitating infusion of geo hydrological knowledge into the programme. It also provided a range of technical innovations which also worked, giving the collaboration a solid base. Within a short period, the failures in Suvarnajala were offset by the relative success of Sachethana. Faith was restored in the Government partnerships. Pani Thiye Panjo in such a context was a windfall. It was a concept that has the possibility to seriously challenge mainstream water resource management paradigms if it proves to be successful on the ground. WASMO was a unique institution, perceived to be free of bureaucratic complexities plaguing other departments. However, the road to success has been paved with challenges.

Since 2006, Arghyam has attempted to add value to such collaborations through various means.

The crux can be listed out as:

1. Collecting, collating and analysing data (or facilitating the same) to promote decision making based on the same

2. Tapping into a dynamic pool of water experts and providing their expertise to NGOs and the Government

3. Facilitating innovation in programmes through exchange and exposure

4. Extensively supporting software activities such as trainings and awareness building programmes for greater demand generation and reach

5. Harnessing the power of collective action by stitching together a range of NGOs and working together on a shared objective

6. Developing and designing systems to track the progress in such programmes and based on data analysis provide continuous feedback to improve efficiency

7. Using the web through the India Water Portal to showcase the work on the ground and use innovative media such as youtube for easy sharing of project experience

However, the challenges to partnering with the Government continue unabated. Increasing interaction with the Government machinery leads to the learning that it views Arghyam as a solution and information provider in the WATSAN landscape. This automatically generates expectations, realistic or otherwise. Does moving closer to the Government machinery mean soft pedalling hard hitting issues? Is it possible to retain ones unique identity still? Being data enamoured, how does one actually bring data to an appropriate level where action is possible?

The following take away's can be listed from engaging in Government programmes and applicable in the future in similar contexts:

1. Participation has to leapfrog to partnerships. Unless Arghyam is recognized as a formal partner by the Government in programme/policy, suggestions will not get its due attention and rarely get acted upon. Mazhapolima is therefore presenting Arghyam with a unique opportunity

2. Its preferable to figure out possible areas of value add a priori to a partnership which would deepen Arghyam's engagement with the programme and also help the organisation garner respect from State agencies

3. A workable strategy has to evolve which allows communication to spread across ranks in the Government institutional hierarchy. Hence a shared goal for the programme has to be developed

Of late there has been a perceptible increase in civil society participation in Government programmes in the water sector in India. Arghyam, a Bangalore based non profit foundation has participated and partnered in drinking water related programmes in the states of Karnataka, Gujarat and Kerala, either directly or through support to local NGOs.

Such collaborations led to improved understanding of managing such partnerships and also helped to reach out to a larger constituency. This publication documents the collective experience of participating/ partnering in Government programmes on safe drinking water and puts forward key learnings and challenges.

Based on its experience, it argues for increased focus in Government programmes on software activities such as capacity building of users and institutions. It also advocates for increased civil society participation in such programmes to improve the quality of implementation and ensure transparency and accountability.

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