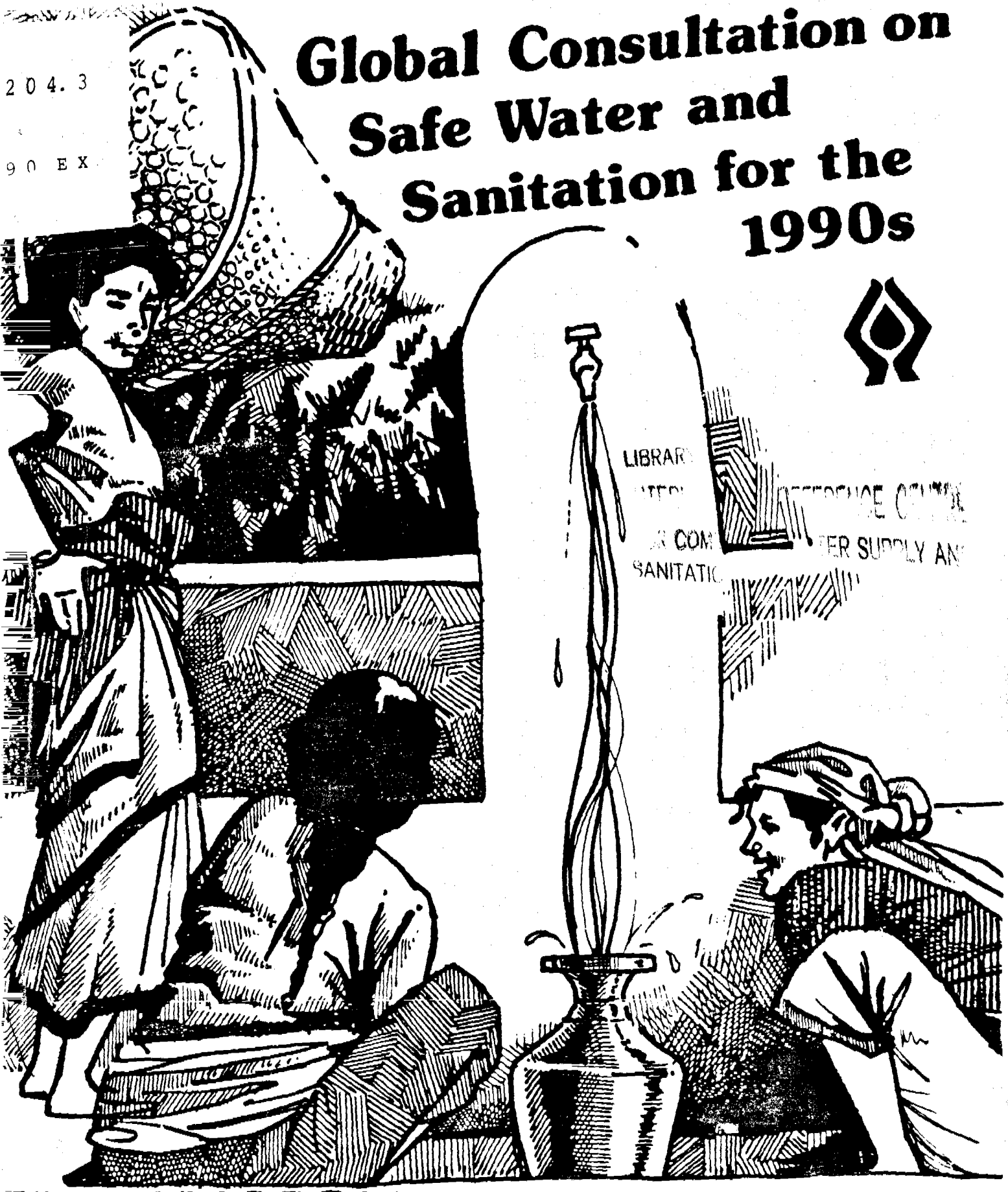
Global Consultation on Safe Water and Sanitation for the 1990s



EXTENSION, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Global Consultation on Safe Water and Sanitation for the 1990s

New Delhi, India
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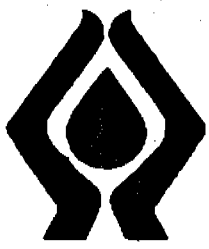

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EXTENSION, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

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Contents

Strategies Towards Social Goals

International experience since the 1977 Mar Del Plata conference has highlighted the societal nature of the Decade's approach and aspirations. Programmes with realistic standards of quality and quantity, aimed towards providing safe water for urban and rural needs, require a quality of response (from policy makers, delivery systems and user communities) which is revolutionary in a basic sense. "One revolution is over. The revolution in thinking that marked the beginning of IDWSSD has become part of the standard approach in low-cost water supply and sanitation programmes....The second revolution, putting revolutionary thinking into practice has proved to be more difficult. Even today only a few national government programmes have been able to develop mutually supportive relationships between engineers and sociologists, drillers and health educators, communities and government bureaucracies in pursuit of the Decade goals." [1] In its report on future strategies, UNICEF declares that "the challenge is to disseminate what has already been learnt from pilot projects...to a scale that can lead to universal coverage of most of the basic services of human development...Nearly half the children in the developing world have no access to clean drinking water. Two thirds of children do not have adequate sanitation. In rural areas the situation is much worse than these national averages". [2] The lesson toward the next decade is clear: while technology and finance for the task of Safe Water 2000 can be mobilised, the critical factors remain of sustained political will and actual community participation.

The Need: Social Change

The technologies appropriate to locating sources of potable water and of delivering such water through mechanical means are today within the reach of most national and regional authorities. The range of available options demands new ways of spreading awareness of alternative choices, and of testing and marketing them. The Decade began with the assumption that safe water constitutes a basic human need. It has ended with the awareness of a remarkable disparity in what is regarded as 'safe' water by those entrusted with the task of delivery on the one hand and what users consider 'safe' on the other. Without a congruence with which to bridge this yawning gap, setting physical and financial target for

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1 Kenya: People, Pumps and Agencies. PROWWESS/UNDP. September 1988. Page 1

2 Strategies for Children in the 1990s. UNICEF. Page 34, 20.

the1990's will be meaningless. A shared understanding between planners and people of safe water--as a concept and as a product--is the only means toward creating that level of demand which can energise and transform both delivery systems and user responses. The delivery of safe water will therefore need to go beyond what science and technology can provide to urban and rural communities out of a tap or a handpump. The system must extend beyond this point, into storage vessels and homes and into human stomachs. The IDWSS Decade was initiated with this challenge and it remains the central issue for Safe Water 2000. "Safe water alone at the well mouth, tap or pump is neither a guarantee or an enhancer of life. Water is safe only if safe as it enters the mouth of the user..." [3] The understanding of safety must therefore be sustained through the range of human behaviours involved in water collection, storage and consumption.

In this perspective, the challenge is revealed in its real dimensions: a process of social change which must first create a uniform understanding of what constitutes safe water, and then build the ability of systems, communities and individuals to keep that water safe until it is consumed. Of the range of viable options which technology offers, the handpump is an obvious symbol and catalyst of hope for a huge section of the world's population. Other scientific and technological breakthroughs have brought the benefits of satellite imagery, advanced engineering, computerised MIS systems and global know-how within reach of even the most remote settlements. Delivery systems are in position, through government agencies with access to technical and financial backups capable of responding to local conditions of water, soil and access. Vast areas of the globe have re-awakened to the contemporary relevance of water conservation systems perfected through centuries of understanding of the natural environment. A network of field experience is available to guide future applications of appropriate technologies, both 'high-tech' and low-cost. There is here the challenge of technical training, yet technology itself is not enough. Delivery systems and user communities both need to absorb issues of health and sanitation, without which any technology (including the handpump) is powerless to change the quality of life for those most in need. If attitudes and behaviour must change, the basic task of Safe Water 2000 become one of education towards social change.

The Experience of Apathy

Attempts at stimulating such change at policy and community levels provide a mixed bag of hope and frustration. The past decade has revealed an enormous apathy toward change in those attitudes and behaviours

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3 Address to the UN General Assembly by James B Grant, UNICEF Executive Director on the occasion of the inauguration of the IDWSSD.

which alone can ensure that technology actually delivers a better quality of life, and not merely better water. Part of the problem is an official preoccupation with physical and financial targets. Yet "the blueprint paradigm cannot be applied to projects which aim to plan, implement and evaluate together with local communities" .[4] A handpump installed is not necessarily a handpump that works, nor one that is used and maintained optimally. This experience suggests that "the most essential emphasis in any development strategy is its focus on the human being and not on any physical accumulations and achievements." [5] Where policy-makers and delivery systems see their task in terms of physical targets, consumers of safe water remain programme objects, not subjects. Communities remain apathetic and dependent, waiting as they have for centuries upon fate, or upon the benevolence of patrons and power-brokers. What is once provided by the delivery system is seen as remaining within that system's domain. There is great resistance towards accepting joint responsibility for a community asset and for managing it independently in the interests of the community at large. Within the official hierarchies, water issues remain separate from those of health, sanitation, and education--concerns of which they must be a part. Each delivery system works in isolation from the other while on the agenda of planners and politicians, empowering people to manage their own lives remains relatively low. Thus, dialogue is rare between the system and the communities it is supposed to serve. Instructions still flow in one direction, with little listening for response. An integrated overview of what constitutes a healthy environment is missing from both plans and community aspirations, except by accident or the fortuitous presence of individuals or institutions which can act as catalysts for common sense.

Awareness and Action

If this appears a gloomy forward to the prospects of 2000, there is enough learning upon which the next decade can draw. Positive experience though scattered, is real nonetheless. The task must now be to bring it together more effectively, so as to forge a collective response capable of transforming planning on a global and national scale. What then are the assets upon which the 1990s can build? There is first a heightened awareness of water issues, both at the policy and user levels. One index of this awareness is the frequency with which the supply of adequate

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4 Kenya: People, Pumps and Agencies. PROWWESS/UNDP. September 1988. Page v.

5 Strategies for the Decade for Nineties. Prof. Mohammed Younis (Grameen Bank, Bangladesh) UNICEF Regional Meeting, India, September 1989. Page 5.

potable water became a political issue during the Decade, through promises made and performance demanded in election campaigns throughout the developing world While such politicisation has its risks (aimed as it often is at increasing, rather than reducing, community dependence on official patronage), it does signal a limit to apathy. Equally significant is the priority accorded to drinking water management in the networks of non-governmental, voluntary activity which have emerged as a potent force for change at the grassroots level. It is these efforts which provide the most significant models for future action, including the spread of technical training, of health awareness and of the ability of communities to interface more effectively with governments. The increasing involvement of NGO's with internationally-funded programmes is one indication of this growing channel for community-based activity. This groundswell has tested many government agencies, stimulating a greater responsiveness to local needs and aspirations. Planning for the next decade can draw on the experience of such NGO-led interaction between policy makers, implementers (including field engineers and mechanics) and local communities, particularly women users. The sub-continent offers important examples: the involvement of the National Women's Bureau in Sri Lanka's WSS projects at Anuradhapura and in the Sarvodaya Movement, the Sind Water and Sanitation Project in Pakistan, the health education activity of the Bangladesh ICDDR and the credit experiments of its Grameen Bank, the SWACH guineaworm eradication project in India's Rajasthan state, the WSS activity of the Women's Coordinating Council of Calcutta, and Nepal's participatory workshops are among many instances. Learning from such experience is the prospect which Safe Water 2000 now offers.

In drawing from others it may be necessary, however, to avoid the trap of seeking 'success stories' that can be easily replicated. "Part of the problem in achieving 'success' is reaching agreement on what is success." [6] 'Success' can no longer be confined to the achievement of time-bound physical targets. It must be understood instead as an ability of communities and authorities to work together towards problem-solving, of a mutual ability to learn through trial and error. "Publicity reinforces success and tends to gloss over long periods of failure prior to the success of a community project...the spirit of acting together as a group for development does not come to a community overnight..." [7] The ability and the stamina to articulate, and then to learn, from one's

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6 Kenya: People, Pumps and Agencies. PROWWESS/UNDP. September 1988. Page 3.

7 Who puts the water in the taps? Earthscan, Washington DC, 1983. Page 86.

mistakes will thus be a critical element in the sharing that can strengthen a global thrust toward the objectives of 2000.

The Challenge Ahead : Peoples Participation

A significant 'success story' emerged in India during a period of severe drought in the desert state of Rajasthan . A guineaworm eradication campaign in southern Udaipur, the SWACH project, brought together a unique combination of community and state effort, linked to the National Drinking Water Mission and to external funding agencies, which included UNICEF and Government of Sweden. Over the Decade, SWACH has been able to reduce dramatically the incidence of guineaworm infection, through community participation. Its catalyst demonstration has gone well beyond the guineaworm to wider concerns of community health and awareness, and to the sharing of this learning with other communities and teams. The Kwale project in Kenya toward community-based handpump maintenance systems offers another example of the participatory approach, its coverage having exceeded the original project area by 27 times. One hundred and twentyfive user-created water committees function under women volunteers. An evaluation in 1988 indicated that all pumps were functioning and the decline in diarrhoea and skin disease had been dramatic. [8]

It is possible to see in the Kwale and SWACH situations a microcosm of the challenge to take the localised lessons of the Eighties into scale, through planning and implementation strategies that can reflect a global campaign through national, regional and local activity. At the heart of this process must be the understanding that the challenge of Safe Water 2000 is essentially a social challenge. It demands as its most critical element that planning be extended from past orientations, based on hardware and physical targets, toward new goals of social empowerment. Communities and individuals who yesterday were dependent on fate or upon external agencies for the quality of their lives must tomorrow demonstrate both the willingness and the ability to manage their own destinies. This calls for other revolutions. Delivery systems must demonstrate an ability to evaluate their role not merely in terms of numbers but in standards of community service. New benchmarks for programme evaluation will therefore be needed which can gauge the ability of project teams to reflect community needs, to build partnerships and, above all, to empower the communities they once patronised--communities which must learn to make demands as clients of systems, rather than as dependants. In one approach to community management set out and tested by PROWWESS, project managers do not start with detailed

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8 Kenya: People, Pumps and Agencies. PROWWESS/UNDP September 1988.

blueprint plans. Based on Decade experiences, a planning and evaluation frame-work PEGESUS (Partnership to Evolve and Grow Effective and Sustained Utilisation of Systems), has been developed. This defines three over-riding criteria of success. They are: effective and sustained utilisation of systems, sustainability and replicablity. [9] Broad guidelines are set out and these become more detailed as project implementation proceeds step by step. A two-way flow of information and monitoring is established between managers and user communities, and benchmarks are established to measure effective utilisation (not merely delivery), sustainable utilisation of WSS facilities through strengthened capacities for problem-solving, as well as the replicability of these achievements in terms of optimal use of local resources (and not as carbon copies). PEGESUS acknowledges that each community situation is unique and cannot be duplicated, yet learning can indeed be extended from experience. It thus provides an important guideline and starting point for a global re-orientation of project approaches, with central roles for women and those others in the community most affected by changes in the WSS situation. The experiences of some communities in applying PEGESUS, such as the community managed water supply programme through an NGO in four villages of West Timor (Indonesia), provide an opportunity for learning.

Community Participation or Community Management?

Participation should mean that communities have a role in choosing the technology appropriate to them, in developing that technology and in controlling its management. In the past when communities have been indifferent to official programmes, the assumption has often been that programme benefits need to be more intensely directed at the 'target population' in order to convince them that this is what they should want. Yet the Decade has revealed that it may often be the design of programmes and technologies that are inappropriate to community needs and aspirations. Community participation can therefore no longer be interpreted as community acceptance of a given direction. It is the direction itself which must be the community's own. The importance of such community involvement does not reduce the critical role of implementors in WSS programmes. While community and voluntary effort can help extend the range of the official motivator's influence, the role of the professional is crucial. The emphasis must therefore be on establishing networks which bring professionals and communities into closer dialogue and partnership, helping governments to move from being providers of systems to becoming promoters and facilitators. This is the objective of India's current experiment with Public Health Engineering

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9 Ibid. Page 3.

Departments (PHEDs) in selected states, where engineering and mechanical teams are being sensitised to their potential as motivators and messengers.

It is thus essential to define participation more precisely in the context of the Decade's experience. Communities must now be assisted to become clients, not mere users or beneficiaries, because clients manage programmes while beneficiaries do not. Participatory models for the 1990s must therefore be models of community management.

India's National Drinking Water Mission (NDWM), established in 1986 with the objective of covering all rural communities with safe supplies by 1990, demonstrates four factors most essential towards successful community projects: an effective technology (such as the India Mark II handpump), clear commitments of financial and administrative support (as in the Mission approach) and structures of self-government which can operate, monitor and evaluate programmes at each level. National commitments of this scale can only be based on an acceptance of safe water as an expression of social justice, where social benefits and costs predominate over financial considerations. Cost recovery has become a significant element in the Decade's debate on participatory strategies. Cost-sharing provides a stake for responsible community participation, indicated in the experience of Sri Lanka, Kenya, and elsewhere. Indeed, studies in India reveal a willingness of communities to pay far more than what is actually necessary. Cost recovery may therefore be legitimate as an ultimate goal through assured supplies and socio-economic processes, which ensure that participants pay as clients for services in which they have a clear management stake. Yet the survival and health of the vast majority of humankind cannot await the evolution of these processes. If safe water is an essential goal of civilised society, normal banking approaches are clearly inadequate. The political dimensions of these challenges are striking.

Urban situations offer particular contrasts if attempts are made to link them directly with rural experience. Where fund mobilisation is easier in urban areas, WSS programmes can be imbalanced in their favour. Conflicts between city needs and those of rural communities (particularly on the periphery of urban development) can follow, as Mexico's Cutzmala project suggests. A more rational approach is to see WSS as a major instrument in improving the quality of rural life, thus helping to stem migration into cities. Sanitation projects often demand distinct requirements, being more individual-oriented and dependent on personal rather than community action. Studies in Indian locations reveal that less than one per cent of public sanitary facilities are optimally used and maintained, while considerable interest exists in access to private facilities. A package of promotional strategies is now essential, which

can include the development of a greater variety of low-cost options, financial incentives for their adoption, training opportunities and marketing techniques which can create and sustain the demand for better sanitation.

Political Frameworks for Planning

People everywhere recognise drinking water as a basic necessity for survival. Yet the absence in many countries of clear government policy and of a national approach was a major constraint in the IDWSSD. "A large number of governments relied only on external assistance...and almost refused to identify the need of water and sanitation as an instrument of social change...While on one hand community participation was being talked about, in reality the whole exercise of mutual discussion evolved around a group of professionals, engineers, administrators, planners: it really did not involve the policy makers and people's representatives".[10] Successful community participation will depend on a foundation of clearly articulated national policy in which WSS is accepted as a core sector of planning. Such policy must in turn be reflected in financial and physical programmes which generate a demand for safe water and simultaneously make such programmes self-sufficient and sustainable. Government and community roles must thus be in mutual support, neither in conflict nor as substitutes. The responsibility of governments to implement, train and communicate cannot be diluted.

Reducing the dependency factors of both citizens and governments is a key element in this process. Achievements in India during the past decade have taken place largely through the mobilisation of indigenous resources: human, scientific and financial. The role of donor agencies has been through the provision of bilateral bridges which have served as catalysts for learning and extension. Project preparation and management, rather than finance, has been the real constraint in the Indian context, an experience which applies to many others facing equal challenges. India has demonstrated that the capital cost of water supply programmes can be reduced by 25 to 30 percent, or even more, if project planning and monitoring is effectively conducted. The Indian experience also highlights the critical need to involve community participation in low-cost water supply systems, which can be supplemented by rain water harvesting and the improvement of traditional structures, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions. During the 1980s India suffered a cycle of drought which was one of the worst in this century. These years proved a trial by fire for the philosophy and thrust of the national Mission. Despite the enormity of a natural calamity, the Mission's experience reflected

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[10] Drinking Water: 1990 and Beyond. Gaurisankar Ghosh, Mission Director, NDWM (Govt. of India), Barcelona, April 1990.

water source. Traditional power structures can be threatened by new pumps and latrines which benefit the poor. Communities who learn to manage safe water will go on from there to make other demands on the system, and to demand management of other aspects of their individual and community lives. People cannot be motivated to participate and manage only upto a given point in a given direction. Encounter may therefore be the other side of the participation coin. Structures for self-government, extending from village and urban communities to the highest levels of national planning, become essential therefore if community participation in safe water is to be sustained as a reality which can lift the quality of community life. India's NDWM is an expression of such a structure, initiated by a major policy decision to assign the responsibility for rural water and sanitation to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Mission umbrella facilitates a total mobilisation of scientific and technical forces, with clear roles for MIS and for communities. The Mission strategy demands people's participation at the village, district, state and central levels, with state assemblies and the national Parliament as final monitors and evaluators. In Thailand, the remarkable success in achieving Decade goals offers another pointer, through sanitation projects which reflect a bottom-up, decentralised approach that responds to community requests without imposing or imploring. Project funds go direct to elected district committees, to which village committees apply after discussions based on local perceptions of need. [11]

The political implication of these ingredients cannot be minimised. There is an enormous reluctance for policy-makers and bureaucracies to sacrifice dependency-building practices which have so far provided political clout and leverage. The will for such change is therefore a crucial element. Without it, community participation is impossible. And without community participation, there can be no way to ensure that water which is safe at the end of a hardware system will remain safe until it is ingested by a human being. The real nuts-and-bolts of

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[11] Insights from Field Practise, UNDP/IBRD

safe water sources as communities, as families and as individuals.

National campaigns will therefore need to be concerned above all with the strategies of participation. "Twenty years ago it was believed that a well installed by a team of experts was enough: today it is known that success depends on the communities being involved in the planning, siting, installing and maintaining of its own water supply".[13] The consequence of limited involvement of villagers in planning, locating and constructing facilities "is a limited sense of ownership and responsibility which leads to limited understanding of the value of the facility or the desire to maintain it. As many as 61 percent of the respondents stated that maintenance was not their responsibility".[14] Working with NGOs, women, local self-government institutions, teachers and schools must be critical elements in a new project mix which is necessary. "Community participation implies a process whereby control of the project becomes a communal responsibility rather than a situation in which project staff determines the agenda". [15] De-learning and re-learning will be necessary. India, for example, will have to turn to turn once again to the lessons of community empowerment and self-help that were the essence of Mahatma Gandhi's movement for political freedom.The ability to share and to delegate will not come easily. Attitudes that have become ingrained over decades of centralised approaches will not change overnight. Administrative gate-keepers will not surrender their controls lightly and people whose apathetic dependence has become a source of political gain for others, cannot quickly shake off the past and accept responsibility for their future. Yet the Eighties have demonstrated again and again that such change is possible, and it is to that change that Safe Water 2000 must now address itself.

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12 The Local Decade, A symposium, Amsterdam, June 1984.

13 State of the World's Children 1989, UNICEF, Page 48

14 Evaluation of the Inpres Water Supply and Sanitation Programme. Ministry of Health, Govt. of Indonesia, May 1987. Page 8

15 Moyamba Clean Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Sierra Leone. WASH Field Report No.217. USAID, December 1987. Page viii.

Women and Water

Women as the managers of domestic water throughout the developing world identify WSS as a first priority because it is they who suffer most from trudging long distances to fetch water and from the absence of sanitation facilities close to their homes. The authority over their own time which WSS projects offer to women is a powerful element in the process of empowerment and social equity.

"Women have the ultimate weapon. They determine whether a facility is used or not".[16] Recognition that no single element was more crucial than the actual involvement of women, was a platform of the IDWSSD: "Participants have stated in the strongest possible terms that such partnerships cannot consist of token involvement, token participation by women, token decision-making by community representatives. Government and non-governmental agencies can no longer ask communities to participate in their projects, to listen to their voices, to understand their needs, to respond to their priorities...Recognising the vital role of women as users, managers, acceptors and change agents in water supply and sanitation, women should be involved at all levels of Decade activities. In order to guarantee that women's key roles at the local levels are recognised, promoted and supported, necessary commitment should be taken to facilitate an active participation in national and international support activities. This includes activities such as policy development and decision-making, project preparation, plannning, implementation and management, monitoring and evaluation, advisory consultancies, community development and health education".[17]

The Decade offers a harvest of constructive experience. In West Bengal (India) the Women's Coordinating Council (Calcutta) has acted as a bridge between the State PHED and village citizens in the construction of sanitary latrines, establishing a much-needed rapport between villagers and government engineers. In Sri Lanka's Anuradhapura Water Supply & Sanitation Programme, the involvement of women as implementors contributed significantly to the success of the project, "changing attitudes regarding use of tubewell water, sanitary latrines, changing other health behaviour and community participation....".[18] In Indonesia 800,000 women volunteers are working to help protect children's health in 57,000 villages. Women-water minders have proved more reliable than

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16 Kenya: People Pumps and Agencies. PROWWESS/UNDP September 1988

17 The Local Decade. A symposium, Amsterdam, June 1984, Page i, 3

18 AWSSP Impact Assessment. December 1989. Page 63

men in Lesotho while in Bangladesh and Pakistan, domestic latrine projects in slum areas reflect the initiative of women residents. Handpump mechanics drawn from women volunteers in Sri Lanka, India and Kenya have proved their competence in a sector far removed from traditional roles and attitudes in these societies.

Involving women in the management of safe water sources must also reflect the considerable variation which exists within the developing world in the social situation of women participants, and in their needs and attitudes. Different approaches may be necessary where women are actively involved in economic production (as in the Surigao rural water supply project in the Philippines), where women have no apparent role in decision-making either at home or in the community (as in Pakiatan's WSS experience in Sind and Kashmir), or where female-headed households predominate due to out-migration of male workers or other social circumstances (as in parts of Africa). This variety must be reflected in planning for women's participation, with budgets which realistically reflect the time, finance and personnel essential toward activating such involvement. Sanitation projects must attend to this aspect with particular care, because the perception of women may differ widely from those of men in this sector, where women are the critical factor toward community acceptance and use. In Bangladesh, it was women who felt the greatest advantage in having a latrine close to home while in Pakistan's Baldia project the initiative for soak-pit latrines again came from women. Full advantage needs to be taken of women's knowledge of water and sanitation aspects of their environment, and in the design and choice of technology appropriate to their location, as experience has demonstrated in the Philippines, Iran, Guatemala and Panama. Training efforts must reflect the special needs of women, as demonstrated by INSTRAW: short-term and refresher programmes, training sites at the village and the importance of developing women as trainers. In all of this, the need for partnership with men is essential, so that the responsibility for safe water does not become yet another burden in which men do not share. Men are often concerned first with the needs of irrigation and livestock, and are frequently less responsive to voluntary work. Thus in many developing societies one must enlighten men first in order to reach women, a factor that deserves careful attention in the 1990s.

Technology, Training and Integrated Development

If power is to be shared, such empowerment also demands a ability to transfer technology effectively, and indeed to define and recognise appropriate technology in terms that are truly appropriate. The past decade has demonstrated that there is no single level of technological

'appropriateness'. Remote-sensing through satellites, investments in updated deep-drilling equipment, improved handpumps and traditional techniques of water harvesting and conservation known centuries ago--all of these come together today in tailoring strategies to the needs of particular communities. Many developing countries are yet to innovate their own technological capabilities or acquire access to technologies more appropriate to their need because of vested interests or heavy dependence on external agencies. The understanding of alternative options and the ability to choose and combine them with confidence, suggests the importance of training as a foundation for transferring technologies, be they imported or indigenous, 'hi-tech' or low-cost. Training could be greatly facilitated through better networks to share technical experience, and thus to leapfrog stages of development and testing. The India Mark II, the Bangladesh Tara, the Afridev handpumps, rain collection tank technology in Kotinga (Indonesia) or Mirtola (India) are examples of the potential for such accelerated sharing. While technology remains the key to an understanding of water and its relationship to the quality of village life, it has been amply demonstrated that such an understanding also requires a basic grasp of health, sanitation, and of the environment. This demands that programmes of child education, adult literacy, primary health, agriculture and industry must all link themselves in order to gain a community's understanding of how to build and manage its own environment. The absence of such integration during the IDWSSD has proved a major constraint. Past practices have separated each of these delivery channels into compartments which seldom touch or interact with each other. "The authorities responsible for rural water supply, health and agriculture may be three different bodies with specific tasks and very few links with one another. This puts the burden on the field worker...who is expected to have multiple skills to achieve an integration at the grassroots which does not exist anywhere else along the line". [19] The so-called beneficiary is therefore bombarded with a plethora of separate messages whose linkages are obscure. The only response possible is one of initial confusion, followed by indifference. These separate aspects of national planning must be knitted into a single, comprehensible idea that can be grasped and translated into action. Meeting in New Delhi in October 1986, the members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) emphasized the need for programme integration on the basis of identified linkages. Recent experience in India (through the National Missions on drinking water, immunisation and adult education) and in Pakistan (through the Sind Water & Sanitation Project) reflects both the challenge of operationalising such integration at the village level (possible only when there is a corresponding confluence at the highest

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[19] Who puts water in the taps?
Earthscan, Washington DC 1983. Page 10.

levels of decision-making), as well as the prospects for change which reveal themselves once such networks and interconnections are established. Processes of self-help and mutual reinforcement are sparked off when the chemistry is right. The greatest attention is needed today in order to forge such alliances of logic and common sense. This demands yet another revolution. The comfortable isolation of bureaucratic cocoons must be broken. Again, the will to change is the essential challenge.

Changing Behaviour : The Communication Factor

Change means that people must change--people who are policy-makers and those who are consumers of water, everyone from the senior-most planner to the village mother and her child. The Eighties suggest that isolated experiments and experiences can indeed be transformed into people's movements if political will is charged with ideas that people can grasp as their own. If the common thread is that behaviours must change, then the most critical element in planning for safe water is that of communication. This may be the most difficult challenge of all, even though its resource requirement is the one most readily available: human beings. What is missing is the understanding of communication not as media products but rather as a process of changing human behaviour. To fill this gap will mean that planners set aside past notions imprisoned in what passes today for mass communication. Still another revolution is required, because in many societies mass media has become that media to which the masses have no access. [20] Until this changes, communication strategies are guaranteed to fail despite the proliferation of hardware and products: satellites, transmission towers, printed materials, radios, T.V. sets, programmes, all by the millions, with computer systems as the latest entry. None of these products have succeeded so far in delivering potable water at the individual level. "Routine production of communication material without paying attention to its proper utilisation, field test and impact analysis can cause more harm than good". [21] The Indian experience is significant: forty years of investment in information, broadcasting and field publicity strategies still require an integrated Mission approach toward persuading the Indian villager to accept basic concepts of safe water and to acquire basic knowledge of how to keep it safe.

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20 Mediation, Gaston Roberge, Chitrabani, Calcutta. 1978

21 Drinking Water: 1990 and Beyond
Gaurisankar Ghosh, Mission Director, National Drinking Water Mission (Govt. of India).
Barcelona, April 1990.

This is because communication has been overwhelmingly misunderstood as a one-way flow of information and products, operating from the omnipotent 'top' to the ignorant 'down'. The need in 1990 is to revive an understanding of communication as a two-way exchange of information and ideas in which the ability to listen is even more important than the ability to tell. Inter-personal communication skills and participatory techniques must therefore be major ingredients in any training strategy which aspires to promote the concept of safe water, and to translate that concept into daily acts of health, hygiene and environmental sanitation. It is only on a foundation of inter-personal exchange between delivery systems and user communities that the tools of mass communication can be made potent and relevant. The concept of 'mass' must be redefined to respect communities and individuals in their own situations. It is then that the immense possibilities of modern media are revealed, as backup to dialogue based on local cultures and traditions of participation and understanding.

Communication planning must now be recognised not as programme support but indeed as the programme itself--the change of human behaviour. "Development communications can serve this change not merely by sending out messages and information but by creating a two-way linkage which implies more than feedback to planners, but includes people in the planning process itself. This requires that development communications be professionalised and integrated into the development process as a whole. In this context it must be recognised that communication is a process bringing people and planners together, not merely a series of products which can be disseminated at large".[22] Such communication planning requires the ability to first articulate what behaviour changes are essential, to specify whose behaviour must change, and to what purpose. It is only then that messages can be intelligently formulated to facilitate such changes. Separate strategies relevant to each target audience then begin to reveal themselves as a natural consequence, and media decisions (with budgets, professional resources and access to mass media) can be taken with logic and a real hope of successful implementation, monitoring and evaluation. These separate strategies may need to address policy makers, participants in the delivery system, trainers and educators, community leaders, village residents, women and children: each in their own way. All strategies will need to be conducted simultaneously, each in harmony with the other, one acting as a reinforcement for the next.

Part of this potential is the methodology of social marketing which has been demonstrated over the past Decade in Haiti, Honduras, the Gambia

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22 Tony Williams, Don Snowden Center for Development Communications, Newfoundland, Canada, January 1990.

and Nicaragua (for promoting ORT), in Brazil (for breast-feeding awareness), and in India, Nigeria, Ghana and Ethiopia (for child survival and family welfare campaigns). "In the industrialised world, the modern media's capacity for mass communication is increasingly being deployed to bring about changes in behavior and improvements in society...Media campaigns have helped to tackle the problems of high blood-pressure, breast cancer, drug abuse, road safety, energy conservation and home accident prevention. Inevitably, such mass-media campaigns have adopted and adapted many of the techniques of the commercial marketing world and therefore attracted the label of 'social marketing'. In the developing world, the new capacity for mass communications has also opened up a potential for social marketing campaigns. And in the last few years, much has been learned about the potential--and the limitations--of social marketing as a means of bringing about improvements in the field of health....The potential of social marketing is only just beginning to be explored. But already there is a body of experience available to guide future efforts. ..It is already possible to say that social marketing is one of the important tools for taking child protection strategies out of the medical chest and putting them into the hands of parents. But there is a great danger that this potential will be squandered in facile imitation of the more visible techniques of commercial marketing, while ignoring the painstaking research, the professionalism, and the attention to details which successful marketing demands".[23] Social marketing is thus a tool, an approach to problem-solving which offers a support to, not a substitute for, community participation and management.

These attitudes and skills have been part of the accelerated IEC (information, education and communication) thrust brought about by India's National Drinking Water Mission, which has generated a marked qualitative change in government priorities vis-a-vis the WSS programme. The NDWM's strategy is to use people's priorities and felt needs as the starting point for communication, as well as to upgrade and build networks of locally available skills and resources (at state and district levels) for communication planning, material production and implementation. Research is an important ingredient in this mix. A knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) survey on water and environmental sanitation was commissioned by UNICEF in support of the Mission's objectives in eight states in 1989. The study highlighted the marked variations between the actual KAP of users and what implementers of WSS programmes perceived such KAP to be. The survey revealed that popular definitions of 'good drinking water' covered both safe and unsafe sources and that the criteria people used to distinguish 'good' from 'bad' drinking water could at times classify handpump water

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[23] The State of the World's Children 1985. UNICEF. Page 51.

as unfit for drinking, while the link between sanitation and health was still weak in the public mind. Building on research, the first phase of NDWM'S communication strategy segmented target audiences, the behaviours desired from these audiences, and the key messages which could be directed at them in order to stimulate change. The second phase concentrated on a communication action plan at selected project locations. A national network of resources institutions, agencies and individuals is being built up to respond to this range of communication challenges: developing inter-personal skills, organising behavioural research, upgrading media capabilities. Professionals have been inducted from the disciplines of communication, media research and social sciences. An inter-ministerial advisory group has been formed to guide communication and media activities related to the programme. Concerned with inadequate grass-root level interaction with the communities for whom services are being provided, the Mission with UNICEF support is establishing communication/social mobilisation cells in state government PHEDs. The objective is to build up a reliable data base to promote policy action in favour of the social and behavioral aspects of the programme, to identify training and orientation needs in communication and social mobilisation within the official delivery system, and to build capacity at district and state levels for communication planning and material development locally, based on local needs. Engineers, geologists, technicians and their assistants, who have neither communication expertise or knowledge nor often an understanding of the need for such inputs, are today being sensitised to see themselves as carriers of health messages and as an important channel for community response and dialogue. The pilot project, launched in seven states, will also help to institutionaiise capacity and responsibility for communication and social mobilisation among drilling crews and handpump installation and maintenance teams.

A thoroughly professional approach to IEC, with its emphasis on research and planning, is indispensable to the objective of water that is safe when delivered and which remains safe until it is consumed.

The Decade Ahead: Opportunities, Not Blueprints

Strategies for extension, communication and community management in the 1990s will require for their success a high level of acceptance of safe water as a social goal. Achivement of targets in the new decade will depend on how effectively a vast range of human behaviours can be altered. The task is one of education, and it can only be achieved through the real participation of people--people as self-reliant individuals and communities, capable of managing their own lives. The dimensions of the task are immense. Progress will demand political will that is translated into clearly articulated national policies and programmes. Planning will

have to reveal new patterns of partnership between implementors and communities. New or changed roles must be accepted for those within the system, and for those outside who can provide essential partnership and support. Financial and administrative commitments must reflect the acceptance of societal goals and self-reliance, and these will in turn demand new benchmarks for project and plan evaluation which allow community participation (including the involvement of women) to be monitored effectively. Training is the foundation on which such new structures can be erected: training that can not only share technology that is truly appropriate, but which sensitises participants towards social roles and builds the capacity for participatory management of safe water. Integration is essential of these strategies with others of health, education, agriculture and related concerns. This too will require major stamina for change at policy-making as well as field levels. In all of this, communication has the central role--no longer merely as project support but indeed as the programme itself. Communication must therefore be accepted as behavioural change, through two-way exchange of information and ideas. This understanding must be backed by professional skills in information, education and motivation.

The IDWSSD clearly demonstrates that there are no formulae or blueprints for any of these needs. Instead, the Decade offers a range of experience and learning that can now be extended worldwide through networks of sharing and support. While every community will require an approach to problem-solving that reflects its own unique situation, the Decade experience can bring these aspirations closer to reality. The future will depend on an ability to share and to learn, to learn most of all that success means self-reliance. A respect for individuals and an ability to listen are the crucial factors. They will determine whether safe water is to be a reality in 2000 or to remain yet another distant dream.