


CHAPTER 1


Fostering Sustainable Development in Water Supply Management: Crucial Role of Credible H R Capacity Building

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Abstract

Drinking water is the essence of life, so the concerns about its management touch millions of lives every day. Jal Jeevan Mission ambitiously targets for providing safe drinking water to each rural household in India on a mission mode. This project envisages pooling of resources (including human resources) *Just in Time* with lean overheads. Capacity building is not an option; it is, practically, 'essential' given the enormity of challenges during implementation and post-implementation phases of this project. *Outsourcing* cuts down government investments on grooming and fostering of staff. However, diminishing trade unionism, unorganized neo-trained workforce and feeble government control may affect the quality of employment fetched through the outsourcing agencies. This paper specifically examines the human resource capacities under Jal Jeevan Mission-Rajasthan, aiming to impart more sustainability in drinking water supply services. It documents issues related to transition in the institutional role, existing shortfalls in the capacities and suggests potential areas for strengthening. The study will empower young minds to work in a new framework, help policymakers to frame lasting policies and guide the outsourcing agencies to stretch beyond switching job-cards.

Keywords: Capacity building, Jal Jeevan Mission, Outsourcing, Sustainable development, Water Supply Management

Introduction

Almost 75% of global population is having access to safe drinking water, but there are alarming numbers (almost 2 billion) which are devoid of safe drinking water facility. Risk associated with chemicals like arsenic, fluoride or nitrate, pesticides, heavy metals, polyfluoroalkyl substances and microplastics are emerging concerns for drinking water quality, besides microbial contamination (WHO, 2021). Piped water supply systems with adequate water treatment facilities are termed as *improved water supply* systems, which can effectively avoid such health risks. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-6 targets to ensure affordable and safe drinking water for the entire world population by the year 2030 (UN, 2015). Various countries have shown commitment to this

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effective systems of fund flow. Expenditures on HR component cannot be overlooked, being the crucial component to delivering the services, hence need to be streamlined most importantly.

Conclusion

The study highlights that impressive achievement have been made in infrastructure creation for people's access to safe drinking water and communicating about decentralization of its management. However, the lackadaisical approach to effective deployment of the workforce for the post-implementation phase can jeopardize the real benefits of the project. It is an opportune time to integrate real intelligence with artificial intelligence for cost-effectiveness, but immediate policy measures are required to retain human resources to sustain the advances made under Jal Jeevan Mission. Developing human resource capacities is a complex and iterative process which does not follow a linear path, hence an iota of flexibility must exist with logical frameworks. There is no singular way to develop capacities, but government must come with some prescriptive measures to integrate loosely placed capacity pools with institutional capacities to sustain the efforts already made. Investments, balanced gender participation and respect for HR capacities can promise long-term sustainability of drinking water supply services.

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