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Improving Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Services: The Hyderabad Experiment

This paper presents a brief account of the reforms undertaken to ensure customer friendly and corruption free supply of water and sewerage disposal services to the citizens in Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, with primary focus on participation of the people and accountability of the organization. It shows the tremendous potential of effective citizen interaction and consumer oriented accountability mechanisms to improve organizational culture and service delivery across not merely municipal services but also a range of other core services that governments provide.

Governance reforms that focus on consumer friendly, efficient and corruption free provision of the most basic services like urban water supply and sewerage disposal would be of interest to the people, public service providers, politicians, donors, development financial agencies and academics in the context of innovative solutions being sought to improve the quality of these services. This paper presents a brief account of the reforms undertaken at the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB). HMWS&SB's experience demonstrates how relatively modest innovations are modernizing the organization, raising its profile among residents and improving accountability and customer responsiveness among staff.¹

The scene in the 1980s

Recurring drought in the 1980s caused substantial reduction in surface water storage and groundwater reserves. Growing urbanization and increasing population started putting greater pressure on the system. The existing water supply network was proving inadequate to meet the growing requirements of the people. The demand-supply gap began widening. The already poor quality of supply began deteriorating further. Daily supply of four to six hours was reduced to one to two hours every alternate day. Added to this, the network was a leaking bucket with unaccounted supply touching 50-60 percent. As a result,

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acute water scarcity, which was a dry season problem, became a chronic year round challenge.²

Dwindling water supplies led to declining annual revenues and operational deficits. Network repairs became progressively difficult. Creditworthiness suffered and prospects of attracting external resources for new infrastructural investments became bleak. Compounding the problem was the fact that the sewerage system, built for a population of less than five lakhs over three quarters of a century ago, was in need of a thorough overhaul.

Earlier, the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) had the mandate to provide water and sewerage services for the entire urban population in Hyderabad. HMWS&SB was constituted because the PHED had clearly proved unequal to the task of increasing supply, improving service quality and ensuring accountability to consumers. HMWS&SB was constituted as a semi-autonomous statutory body in April 1989 at the instance of The World Bank in view of conditionality to provide loan for water supply and sewerage infrastructure, investing it with functional and financial powers to facilitate decentralized and democratic service delivery. HMWS&SB is managed by a board of directors, chaired by the Chief Minister with the Managing Director drawn from the Indian Administrative Service.

Alternatives

The Government of Andhra Pradesh did not opt for adding water supply and sewerage disposal functions to the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad. Incidentally, the twin-cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad had a municipal corporation each till these were merged after Andhra Pradesh was formed. Water supply and sewerage disposal, which were with the Secunderabad civic body, were subsequently handed over to PHED, as in the case of Hyderabad.

A point relevant in this context is that the twin-cities had remained for very long periods administered by a Special Officer, without an elected body. On the issue of delegating powers to local bodies, governments are at times carried away by narrow political considerations like not wanting institutions dominated by other political parties or succumbing to pressures of local legislators on grounds that it would result in encroachment of their turf by elected municipal counselors. Financial, locational, technical and managerial considerations in the planning and execution of major infrastructure projects may also weigh against such

delegation. But funding agencies are also at times reluctant to finance schemes of institutions whose creditworthiness and repayment capacity is doubtful.

PPP or public-private partnership was a highly controversial initiative that was being canvassed around that time as an alternative pattern of service delivery in the water sector. PPP would mean a variety of partnerships between public and private partners that did not necessarily involve transfer of ownership, operations and management to the private sector. As indicated in the Yale-UNDP Partnerships Program model (1986), responsibilities involving asset ownership, capital investment, design and construction, operation and revenue realization can be entrusted to private partners or shared between the two.

The extent of partnership may range between two extremities – full public ownership as at present in India and full private provision as is currently being done in the UK. It may also mean partnerships involving passive public or private investment; design-construction contracts; operation contracts; joint ventures; build, operate and transfer arrangements; or concession contracts. In all these, however, the government retains the regulatory role and sets performance standards and monitors strict adherence of these standards of service in the pursuit of public good.

An OECD study found that despite the significant increase in PPP in the urban water sector, only three percent of the population in poor emerging countries is provided with drinking water through private operators; globally, there are about 200 million people that are served through private operators.³ High investment, long payback period, low return on investment, political and regulatory risks, contentious contractual terms, social resistance, serving the poor who cannot afford to pay, among others, have forced a marked slowing down of private investment in the sector.

Since 1991, when it became a conscious policy of donor agencies, the number of such projects peaked to more than 35 in 1999 but reduced steeply to 20 in 2000. An increasing number of PPP water projects in emerging markets are in crisis. Some operators began retreating from certain emerging markets. In hindsight, it would appear that the decision of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to have a semi-autonomous statutory public service provider to manage the water and sanitation infrastructure in the state capital was an appropriate alternative under the circumstances.

A recent attempt at parceling out water distribution in a part of the twin-cities did not materialize on account of the small area offered. HMWS&SB has just begun outsourcing billing. An independent initiative that has recently emerged is the sale of water to the needy by private bore well owners through water tankers. Overexploitation of groundwater by these private operators has led to drying up of neighboring bore wells used by individuals to supplement piped public supply and an alarming lowering of the water table. To discourage this, HMWS&SB started supplying water in tankers as part of its Metro Customer Care online helpline.

Peoples' participation initiatives

Though HMWS&SB was set up in 1989, its efforts had hardly any impact in improving service delivery, despite guidance of The World Bank and interaction with experts owing to poor management control, complex procedures and resistance to change. Effective people oriented service delivery reforms had to wait till a dynamic Managing Director was appointed in late 1997 to provide the requisite leadership. It was around the time that The World Bank, which had funded an \$ 89 million water and sanitation project in 1990 that was under implementation for eight years, withdrew from the country in the wake of the second nuclear test. It was on the verge of sanction of a second infrastructure project when it withdrew.

The initiatives that unfolded over two years (November 1998-December 2000) included: (a) Customer Meets campaign; (b) Metro Customer Care; (c) Single Window Cell; (d) Citizen's Charter; (e) media interaction; (f) alternative disputes redressal mechanism (Water Lok Adalat); and (g) e-government initiatives.

Customer Meets campaign

In a move initiated by the Managing Director during the first fortnight of November 1998, there were a series of face-to-face meetings between the officers of HMWS&SB with the public, public representatives and the media to understand the difficulties faced by the people and elicit their views on improved service delivery. This initiative was called Customer Meets campaign. In attending these meetings, senior officials of HMWS&SB were completely unprepared for the diversity and number of people who turned up (ex-ministers, VIPs, retired senior officials, besides citizens); the directness with which grievances were

addressed, and above all, the gratitude expressed by the people to staff undertaking the campaign. This led to a greater willingness among staff and senior officials of HMWS&SB to do something about the problems citizens faced daily.⁴

Hence, when decisions were made to undertake reforms, there was far less opportunity for protest among HMWS&SB staff. HMWS&SB was under considerable pressure from citizens (who had attended meetings), politicians (who had observed the campaign from a distance) and the media (which had covered the initiatives) to respond to citizen articulated concerns and improve service delivery. Public expectations for change combined with support for service delivery reform among managers, led to the implementation of three innovative service focused reforms over an eighteen month period, which caused a profound shift in HMWS&SB's organizational mission and culture. This, in turn, led to improved service delivery performance and enhanced financial viability as an autonomous public sector organization.⁵

This campaign paved the way for regular system of monthly local level meetings of a similar nature providing the public a regular direct open form to bring their problems and suggestions to the notice of top management. The methodology adopted at these meetings was to assign responsibility for each item publicly to the concerned section officer at the meeting itself. The consumer was advised to bring non-compliance if any, to the notice of higher authorities at the next meeting.

It must be mentioned here that this highly effective interaction had unexpected fallout. Local politicians became unhappy at getting marginalized as the grievances of their locality residents were being resolved without their intermediation. This, it is said, led to pressure being brought upon the political executive to give up this peoples' participation initiative lest it should make people's representatives redundant! This is one obstacle in the path of establishing direct channels of communication between the public and the public service provider that the top management will have to boldly face and resolve with the help of the political executive.

However, as a result of these meetings the top and middle management personnel became fully alive to the plight of the citizens in relation to the quality of water supply, sewerage and billing. The problems that emerged have been catalogued in Table-1:

Table-1

Problems

Water supply	Sewerage disposal	Billing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erratic Supply. • Low pressure. • Contamination. • Leakage. • Illegal tapping. • Bore well break down. • Supply to poor localities. • Public stand post supply to the poor. • Change of line. • Delay in service connections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choking of line. • Overflow of sewage water. • Missing manhole. • Cleaning of septic tank. • Delay in new service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faulty meter. • Meter theft. • Non receipt of bill • Excess billing • Change of category

Inaccessibility, unresponsiveness, rudeness, lack of accountability, among others, were complaints against staff behavior. Demand for illegal gratification was another serious complaint relating to all types of services. Non-transparent and complicated procedures involved in complaint redressal and new service applications were also highlighted in the hope that the management would simplify procedures, reducing the time, cost and effort of the consumers.

Metro Customer Care

Hitherto, complaints used to be received and handled at the lowest administrative level of sections in the organization, with no database for monitoring and control and without access to and involvement of senior management in the redressal of grievances, and above all, with no assessment of efficiency of disposal with reference to norms of service delivery and standards of redressal. The net result was corruption and consumer apathy. The public was reluctant to complain, as it was of no use unless they were willing to use influence, pay speed money or use threat.

In order to substantially improve service delivery performance and to address citizen complaints promptly, Metro Customer Care was set up as a 24 hour seven day online computerized toll free call centre at the HMWS&SB headquarters to receive complaints and monitor and coordinate response in February 1999, establishing a direct link between the head office and sections.

The complaints received were registered, numbered and transmitted to the concerned sections to report compliance back to the centre. Complaints efficiency redressal norm for each type of complaint was calculated with reference to service delivery norms set out in the Citizen's Charter. The section management's accountability was fixed by compiling quantitative performance data to hold them responsible for poor performance. The Managing Director undertook a monthly review. Section-wise performance efficiency was also publicly displayed with details of performance or the lack of it on the part of field staff. It had an impact as never before. As a result of this innovation:

- Complaints redressal procedures were standardized and simplified.
- Access to service provider improved.
- The number of complaints registered substantially increased.
- All complaints began to be addressed.
- Complaints redressal improved.
- There was substantial change in staff behavior (accessibility and politeness).
- Average time taken to respond to a complaint was reduced.
- Corruption declined.

A study⁶ however found that even though HMWS&SB was receiving roughly 40 percent more complaints every month, which had gone up to around 5,500 a month, only less than 10 percent of the customers appeared to be aware of this hotline facility in spite of publicity about the same, indicating the scope for further enhancing coverage and effectiveness of the service. It was found that HMWS&SB paid less attention to increasing access to water and sanitation needs of the poor. While the free hotline facility had benefited the population, only 10 percent of the calls were made by slum dwellers in spite of it being a toll free service.

Those who had no access to the telephone or who did not use this facility had to personally present their complaints at the concerned section office. The system accorded priority to the user of the hotline only, as hotline complaints figure prominently in the monitoring mechanism. This was happening in spite of care being taken to instruct the section managers to convert complaints in person and in writing into hotline complaints. According to the study, "to the extent that in-person filers are low income consumers, the Board's increasing reliance on IT for complaints management and staff performance evaluation is exacerbating the gap in responsiveness to O&M problems between the poor and the non-poor households." It must be said, however, that this is

a defect that can be rectified by HMWS&SB quite easily, which, in turn, will have significant impact on equity in distribution.

Single Window Cell

The next innovation was the setting up in April 1999 of a Single Window Cell to receive, process, sanction and ground new service connection applications at the HMWS&SB headquarters as another dedicated computerized office, which like the Metro Customer Care, centralized the whole process hitherto handed at the section level. As a part of this exercise, the procedure for application and sanction and the agency for execution of service connection were modified, simplified and made less costly and speedier.

Earlier, new service connection requests and execution had to be invariably undertaken through licensed private plumbers who helped institutionalize and camouflage corruption. They were not only plumbing the line but also the system by serving as conduits of corruption. Then, consumers had to file applications personally in the concerned local office. Service charge payable was calculated in a complex non-transparent process with considerable discretionary powers vested with the officer. The consumer had to visit four to five offices to secure sanction, road cutting permission, etc., perhaps a number of times.

The entire procedure was modified under the new system. Discretion was removed in service charge determination by calculating it with reference to area served. A dedicated task force called the *Green Brigade* was set up, as a HMWS&SB agency, to provide service connection, thereby dispensing with the pernicious practice of private agents and convoluted procedures. Sanction can now be given within seven days to those who file valid papers for new service connections, wherever feasible. Further, those who are unable to pay the service connection charges upfront are given the option to pay in installments. This removed the entry barrier for new poor consumers. As a result, new sanctions are being given in about 15 days without difficulty.

Citizen's Charter and Water Lok Adalat

In January 2000, HMWS&SB adopted a *Citizen's Charter* outlining service standards, service delivery norms and grievance redressal

standards, publicly acknowledging its commitment to improving the standards of service to citizens. The charter norms formed the basis for complaints redressal, efficiency and other performance evaluation indicators. Further, it enjoined HMWS&SB to compensate the citizen in case of non-compliance with commitments made in the Citizen's Charter. It also indicates the citizen obligations that the state hopes it would fulfill.

An allied institutional innovation was to establish a binding alternative dispute redressal mechanism to speedily resolve pending disputes in the courts relating to billing and payments. Introduced in December 2000, it was called *Water Lok Adalat*. This provided the aggrieved consumer an inexpensive window of redressal and enabled HMWS&SB to improve collection of old arrears arising out of problematic accounts. One estimate put the number of billing disputes in courts at 1,200. HMWS&SB earned substantial goodwill from the public and consumer rights groups as a result of establishing the Water Lok Adalat.

Media interaction

Media exerts tremendous pressure on civic authorities like the HMWS&SB by publishing reports, letters to the editor, photographs and articles on poor service, negligence, corruption, etc. It goes to the credit of the Managing Director that the analysis of and response to media criticism forms part of the daily routine. Of late, the local cable channels have started highlighting similar issues. A system of direct response to media criticism and direct interaction with media by the chief executive are exceptional practices. The organization is thus constantly exposed, alive and responsive to media coverage of public concerns related to water and sewerage problems.

Though not at its initiative, another novel public contact model became a regular feature in Hyderabad wherein the Managing Director of HMWS&SB, along with other civic administrators, participated in a weekly phone in live telecast by a local cable company in a program for the benefit of citizens. This program "provided an opportunity to the Managing Director to demonstrate to a large and diverse audience of government leaders, employees and citizens Metro Water's commitment to responding to citizen's complaints. A unique aspect of the program is the placement of the Managing Director in the public spotlight where he becomes the public face of the organization. This ensured that he alone is held to account for service delivery failures."⁷

Frequent media interaction has now crystallized into a regular weekly press briefing with the reporters of the city newspapers and other media in which the Managing Director discusses the problems of HMWS&SB, the plans for augmentation of supply, etc., establishing not only a link with the media but also with the consumers through the media. HMWS&SB also uses local press and the visual media to publicize the Citizen's Charter, the toll free hotline for complaints and other consumer friendly measures besides notices of operational and unscheduled emergency interruptions in supply, etc.

e-government initiatives

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are capable of being applied to systems of governance so as to secure wider participation and more cost effective involvement of citizens and institutions in the process of governance. ICT helps an institution to be more transparent and responsive besides helping streamline the steps associated with the receipt of requests for service, processing of requests and delivery of the service in a reliable, efficient, cost effective and speedy manner suitable for enforcing the Citizens Charter. These technologies permit the design, development and implementation of sophisticated management information systems, performance evaluation systems and the like that enable an organization to pin down the staff to the smallest detail and to make them accountable to top management. Electronic service delivery is a cheap, time saving, efficient and visible e-government initiative.

HMWS&SB has taken major strides in the use of ICT to secure compliance of the Citizen's Charter to improve customer satisfaction and increase people's participation. Access to information, facility for downloading application forms and details of procedures, filing of applications and complaints online, facility for payment of bills through e-Seva, securing supply of water in tankers through toll free hotline, database management, management information systems, performance evaluation systems and supply of mobile phones to field staff are among the major uses to which these are put to by HMWS&SB.

Performance evaluation based on automated systems has empowered the top management as never before to demand accountability to the management and to its clientele. Numbered and acknowledged customer complaints received on hotline and conveyed by telephone to various sections for compliance are fed into a database to generate an online program called *Complaints Redressal Efficiency* to monitor staff

performance in redressing grievances based on Citizen's Charter norms of service delivery. This has brought in certainty, speed and accountability in the disposal of complaints as it has strengthened the supervisory role of senior managers so badly found wanting under the earlier manual decentralized opaque procedure for handling complaints.

Impact

The reform package pursued by HMWS&SB sought to bring it closer to the ideal it has set before itself.⁸ HMWS&SB aimed at and has managed, to some extent, to achieve people's participation, which is the core of the service delivery function. The HMWS&SB case demonstrates the crucial role citizens are capable of playing in changing an organization from a mere service provider into a new vibrant and consumer friendly service organization. The participatory approach and the resultant service orientation in its policies and procedures have resulted in the transformation of organizational culture.

These measures have also enhanced the financial standing of the organization and contributed to greater willingness on the part of consumers to pay for services availed, improved the organization's ability to approach the customer and insist on collection of dues and helped it to collect a part of the arrears that remained unpaid for years and entangled in litigation in courts.

HMWS&SB claims to have stepped up its collection by almost a quarter in 2000, another 18 percent in the next year and double that in 2002. The number of consumers paying bills regularly went up from a mere 60,000 to 1,55,000. There were nearly 2.8 lakh customers who had not paid anything to HMWS&SB since 1 January 2004. In order to lure them to pay, a one-time settlement was introduced in July 2004, as a result of which monthly collection improved from maximum of Rs.6 crores to an all-time high of Rs.18.44 crores in 2004. Over 17,000 chronic defaulters who had never paid anything paid up. In addition, HMWS&SB was able to enhance tariff without facing much resistance. Recently, it introduced spot billing to reduce the time lag between billing and collection.

Increased revenues have improved its financial position. As a result, investment in essential network repairs could be stepped up. HMWS&SB's creditworthiness and its ability to borrow capital for investment in new infrastructure like the Krishna Water Supply Project at a cost of Rs.833 crores was a very welcome outcome. "The Metro

Water case provides a useful example of the interplay between customer responsive service delivery reforms, medium term organizational change and performance improvement, and long term impact on core services.”⁹

Demand for illegal gratification for services was silently targeted without being expressly stated. Standardization of fee structure and removal of discretion to the staff in the determination of new service connection charges and centralization of receipt and automated processing of new service applications in the Single Window Cell in a transparent manner have reduced the scope for demand of speed money and collusive bribe for reduction of charges.

The most significant measure here was to dispense with the services of licensed plumbers to file applications and to undertake the job connecting the line to the premises. The formation of the Green Brigade to do this effectively broke the *corruption link* between the customer and the field staff. Simplification of procedures relating to pre-sanction verification further reduced the time lag between application and sanction. Simplified computerized online complaints procedure and computerized performance evaluation system were major reforms aimed at reducing corruption.

In the decentralized opaque system of handling complaints before Metro Customer Care was introduced, one was not sure of the complaint being heard unless a bribe was paid. As a result, many people did not bother to complain at all. Another initiative was to reduce the scope for collusive corruption between customers and meter readers to suppress consumption and reduce charges by pooling all meter readers under one officer and shuffle them at regular intervals for deployment. Computerized on the spot billing has been introduced. There is a proposal to contract out billing. This is capable of further reducing scope for leakage of revenue, provided it is strictly supervised through random checks made to ensure correctness of billing.

On the efforts on this front it has been said that “given the growing discontent with corruption of all forms that is being documented by the media and independent researchers throughout South Asia it would be interesting to explore whether innovation promoted as efforts to boost transparency would not, as a refreshing departure from the norm, help to garner the kind of support that HMWS&SB feels is so critical at this juncture.”¹⁰

Success factors

Of this reform, the Institute of Development Studies identified certain external, organizational and individual factors that have contributed to the success of these measures after a detailed evaluation of the reform process involving organizational transformation and improved service delivery performance. Sustained interaction of the organization with politicians, media, citizens and professional networks have deeply influenced the professional character of the body and contributed to improved service delivery, as a result of the establishment of formal institutional mechanisms described in detail earlier. Collective demands led to improved services and strengthened mutual trust. Four organizational factors: re-centralization of complaints handling and new service connections; decentralization of management authority by placing all staff under section managers; introduction of teamwork at the section level; and e-government initiatives enumerated above have also enhanced performance improvement.

Re-centralization has radically altered established hierarchical relations between service managers and their immediate supervisory middle level officers, which had impeded and compromised the flow of performance information to service managers prior to reform. “In both the reforms (Metro Customer Care and Single Window Cell) citizen interface, one of the most difficult areas for senior managers to monitor with regard to frontline staff performance was re-centralized and this provided senior managers with much greater access to reliable information. This also exposed the subtle ways in which lower staff undermined attempts to improve performance and enabled to counter resistance to change.”¹¹

Decentralization and teamwork helped manage work without additional staff and better output. ICT also helped. A strong customer focused organizational culture emerged in HMWS&SB as a result of the reforms and crucial leadership provided by the Managing Director, enabling these reforms to become sustained. One can only hope that these reforms will continue to be deepened, broadened and sustained over time. Lastly, high level of work and public service motivation were also contributory to success.

Accountability

Accountability relationships were the major focus of Caseley’s (2003) study.¹² Against this background the study analyses the new accountability relationships in HMWS&SB from the angle of “engagement – a relationship operating between two actors where by

demands for improved service delivery performance are articulated through formal, accessible, and transparent accountability mechanisms; and responsiveness – the extent to which the party upon whom demands are made takes one or more of three actions, namely answerability (the provision of information and or a decision); enforcement (strengthening the achievement of service norms); and organizational change (changing the way services are delivered) *vis-à-vis* the political executive, media, senior managers, professional networks, frontline workers, local politicians and citizens before the reforms and after.”

The unidirectional and weak accountability that existed prior to the establishment of the statutory board became bi-directional and strong with its establishment, with functional autonomy to the institution and greater demand for accountability and responsiveness to the political executive. Internal accountability of the field staff to the senior management and external accountability of the organization to the citizen were weak. As a result organizational changes in the 1990s had little impact on service delivery performance then, in spite of demand from citizens for change. Accountability demands access to accurate performance data to achieve service norms or to make organizational changes. This was not possible due to collusion between frontline staff and middle managers.

Citizens played a crucial role in changing this relationship and achieving long-term service delivery performance. The mechanisms of Metro Customer Care and Single Window Cell helped institutionalize new accountability mechanisms to enable by citizens to demand results from managers, and top management, with reciprocal demands on the citizens for prompt payment of bills, by the Board. As a result, the relationships between citizens and senior managers; citizens and frontline workers, workers and senior managers, media and senior managers; and citizens and local politicians became bi-directional and strong. The study found that this external and internal tripartite accountability dynamics to be the pivot around which all other accountability relationships collectively contribute to service delivery improvement. Institutionalized citizen engagement through formal accountability mechanisms has been the key to HMWS&SB’s overall success, according to this analysis.

Citizen’s demand for accountability has enabled management to hold section staff accountable for achievement of service norms or to undertake organizational changes. Citizen interactions with local politicians help them to identify and demand attention to neighborhood problems. With more active engagement from citizens and politicians,

media is able to influence senior managers thereby increasing pressure to improve service delivery on both senior managers and section staff.

To quote Caseley's (2003) study again, the HMWS&SB case "demonstrates the crucial role diverse and multiple institutional accountability mechanisms can play in sustaining a cycle of demand for accountability (engagement) and organizational response (answerability, enforcement and organizational change) that can deepen improvements in service delivery performance over time. Rather than rely on traditional accountability mechanisms... the case demonstrates the efficacy of establishing new and innovate mechanisms through which various actors can place demands on service providers for improved performance."

Conclusion

This paper deals with sharing water scarcity by more equitable supply of available water; but not achieving the goal of full pressure 24/7 water supply and modernizing the sewage system, built over 70 years ago. This calls for measures to minimize the massive physical and metering leakage in the scarcely available supply; to maximize collection of arrears of revenue and monthly remittances; to increase tariff to step up internal generation; to improve creditworthiness in the market and to attract massive infusion of critical capital investment in new infrastructure.

To accomplish this, HMWS&SB will have to sustain and further broaden the innovations outlined above (which have, in no way, created a utopia); to further improve financial and personnel management; to find innovative ways of partnerships for augmentation of supply; and expansion and modernization of the network. The Government of Andhra Pradesh, on its part, will have to grant fuller pricing and personnel management autonomy to HMWS&SB and reduce political interference. Finally, the consumer will have to come forward to meet his obligations enjoined on him in the Citizen's Charter.

The study, however, shows the tremendous potential of effective citizen interaction and consumer oriented accountability mechanisms to improve organizational culture and service delivery across, not merely municipal services; but also, a range of other core services that governments provide.

Notes:

1. Jennifer Davis, *Good governance in South Asia*.
2. Jennifer Davis, *ibid*.
3. *Public private partnerships in the urban water sector*- OECD Policy Brief (2003).
4. In an incisive 2003 study, *Blocked drains and open minds: Multiple accountability relationships and improved service delivery performance in an Indian city*, Jonathan Caseley of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK, found that this campaign ‘involved turning established public sector manager-citizen relations upside down, requiring senior managers to leave the comfort and authority of their offices and facilitate meetings with citizens in neighborhoods throughout the city.
5. The Customer Meets campaign which had never been undertaken before by a public sector organization in AP played a pivotal role in Metro Water’s transformation as it re-established relations between citizens and senior and middle level managers and built consensus around key service form priorities. As a consequence, the reform agenda was not defined and imposed from above, as is often the case in public sector service reform, rather it was grounded in citizen consultation, while at the same time taking into consideration Metro Water’s existing human and financial resources (Caseley, 2003).
6. Jennifer Davis, *ibid*.
7. Jonathan Caseley, *ibid*.
8. “A customer is the most important visitor to our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business. He is a part of it. We are not doing a favor by serving him. He is doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so”- M.K.Gandhi.
9. Jennifer Davis, *ibid*.
10. Jonathan Caseley, *ibid*.
11. Jonathan Caseley, *ibid*.
12. This study seeks to shift the present emphasis from state based networks of *horizontal* accountability agencies and *traditional* hierarchical, professional, legal and political accountability relationships. It supports the plea for inclusion of societal demands directly in the working of horizontal accountability institutions; or the establishment of the new institutions that strengthen state-society relations, while simultaneously improving both state accountability and service delivery. It further seeks a more comprehensive definition of accountability to include a responsiveness dimension as opposed to traditional elected representative-public sector official accountability relationships due to their failure to deliver responsive public services.