

**AAPNI YOJNA: A NEW CONCEPT OF WATER SUPPLY IN CHURU DISTRICT, RAJASTHAN****Anju Ojha**Assistant Professor (Geography), Govt. Lohia PG College, Churu (Rajasthan) India  
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**Abstract:** *Aapni Yojna is a rural water supply project of unusual size and complexity. The project area covers about 20,000 sq. km. in three districts of northern Rajasthan viz, Churu, Hanumangarh and Jhunjhunun. The Project is co-funded by the Government of Germany through its development bank, Kfw. The bulk of the investment is dedicated to the technical works implemented by the Project Management Cell, a special unit of the Public Health Engineering Department of Rajasthan. The project's main objective is to improve the health status and living conditions of the target population. Sustainable water supply is ensured from the Indira Gandhi Canal, as ground water is insufficient and saline. A review of past policies programs and progress of rural water supply brings out that the Indian government's efforts to provide adequate quantity of safe drinking water have yielded significant results. Yet, the goal of providing adequate quantity of potable water to all persons living in rural areas has not been achieved for a number of reasons. The paper describes the basic concept and its impact in the study area.*

**Introduction**

The Project's main objective is to improve the health status and living conditions of the target population. Sustainable supply is ensured from the Indira Gandhi Canal, as groundwater is insufficient and saline. Aapni yojna was started from 1994 with the financial help German development bank Kfw but it came in the field or villages after 2000 AD. The main objective of the project was community development through community participation and the implementation of the activities like reduce of wastage of water, contribution by the community towards cost recovery, to create awareness and responsibility for the consumption of water, to implement the construction of low cost sanitation facilities etc. To achieving these objectives Aapni yojna completed number of works in the project area. About 234 water distribution units in Churu district. Apart from this 178 women group formed in Churu District. The one of the most important committee at village level, formed at the beginning of the project is called Water and Health Committee (WHC) consisted of community members or villagers, elected by community itself. The committee, in general, is responsible to oversee all activities related to water distribution and management. About 87.31 percent people of Churu district reported that WHC members were formed by villagers itself. Aapni Yojna is a successful project and unique in nature and we have involved consumers right from the beginning. We have introduced the payment collection system to cover the operation and maintenance cost, but presently the operation and maintenance is in the hands of PHED. People have a faith that the PMC's services are more reliable than services of any other agency.

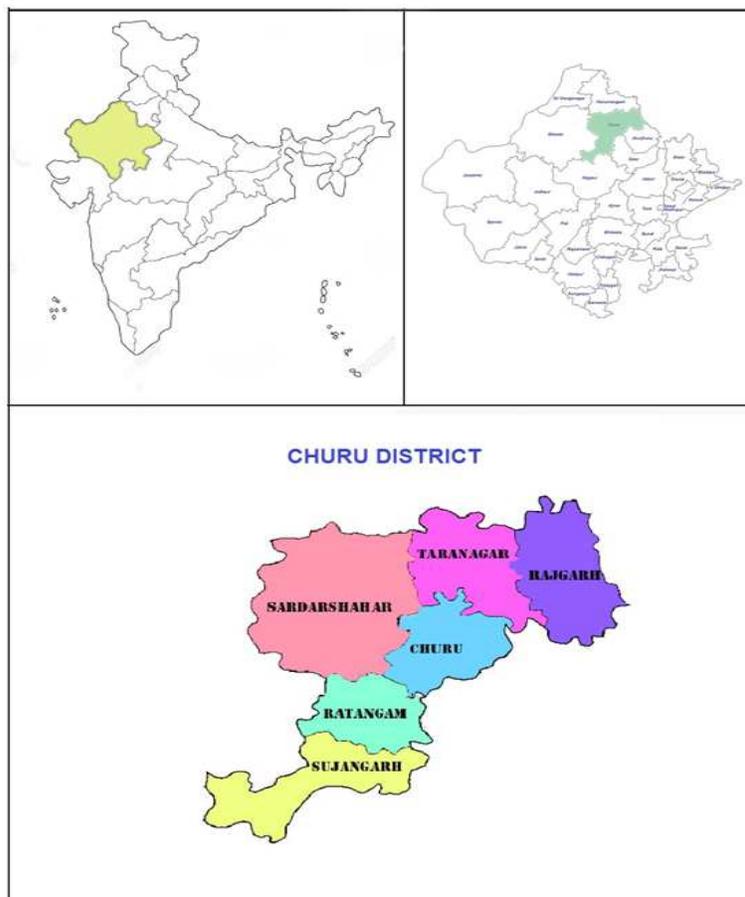
**Demand Driven Approach**

It was the first project in Rajasthan to employ a community-based, demand-driven approach in which the local people were involved in planning and overseeing the construction of the systems and has been responsible for the operation and maintenance of water supply.

**Study Area**

Churu district is the part of Thar desert located in the western part of Rajasthan State extending between 27° 24' to 29° 00' North latitudes and 73° 40' to 75° 41' East longitudes. The district covers an area of 13784.38 sq. kms. with population of 20,39,547 (Census 2011). It is bounded in the north by Sri Ganganagar district; in the west by Bikaner district; in the east by

Sikar and Jhunjhunu districts of Rajasthan and Hissar of Haryana; and in the south by Nagaur district of Rajasthan.



### Methodology

The sample study was conducted in 08 villages of 04 tehsils selecting 02 villages from each tehsil. The criteria of selection are villages having Aapni yojna water supply activities and sizeable population of livestock. The data collected with the help of structured questionnaire and personal interview. About 20 percent households have been covered.

### Awareness of Water Conservation

The table shows that about 75 percent people are very well aware about water conservation measures. About 17 percent villagers are not aware about water conservation measures in the study area. About 08 percent people have not given any response. This shows that awareness regarding water conserving among public. The details are as follows.

**Table 01: Awareness of Water Conservation**

Response	Percent
Yes	75
No	17
No Response	8
Total	100

Source: Field Survey

### Progress in Water Conservation

The main objective of the Aapni yojna is to reduce wastage of water and to create awareness and responsibility for consumption of water among community. About 65 percent villagers of Churu district reported that awareness level regarding water conservation among community has been increased after introduction of Aapni yojna. About 27 percent villagers of said that

water conservation has not been improved after introduction of Aapni yojna. Whereas 08 percent villagers of has not given any answer. They just said don't know whether any water conservation system is improved or not. The following table shows the details of progress in water conservation system in the project area.

**Table 02: Progress in Water Conversation System**

Response	Percent
Yes	65
No	27
No Response	08
Total	100

Source: Field Survey

### **Water Quality**

Water quality in the project area is very good at the beginning of the project but nowadays water quality has not maintained properly. This is marked by about 60 percent people of study area. On the other hand about 30 percent people are not happy with water quality. They said that some time water is not filtered and treated properly. About 10 percent people have not answered related to quality of water. They are not happy with the present water supply so they don't give any response.

**Table 03: Quality of Water**

Response	Percent
Good Quality	60
Not Good	30
No Response	10
Total	100.00

Source: Field Survey

### **Judicious Use of Water**

The following table shows the response of villagers related to use of water in proper way. About 66 percent villagers of use water in judicious way. About 23 percent villagers of the study area are not satisfied the use of water in proper way. They said that villagers are using water in other activities such as kitchen garden, construction, animal feeding etc. About 11 percent people have been not given any answer. The details of water us in proper way are as follows.

**Table 04: Judicious of Water**

Response	Percent
Yes	66
No	23
No Response	11
Total	100

Source: Field Survey

### **Health Improvement**

In most villages there was not enough water to drink before introduction of Aapni yojna. Water from kunds was rationed since it had to last throughout the year. It was a common experience that people feared that guests would ask for water to drink. Water level in wells was normally very deep and had high levels of fluoride, salts and microbes that affect the health of the people. Health education and women participation is one of the major objectives of the Aapni Yojna project. The objective of the project is to alleviate the health status of the people. The health education programme seeks to identify the key health problems such as water and sanitation related, unhygienic behaviors and beliefs, and to provide education to realize the full health impact of the facilities provided. Until water supply is commissioned, people had no interest in health education. Their priority was water of any quality. The following table shows that 56 percent people agreed about health improvement after intervention of Aapni yojna. About 39

percent people said that there is no improvement of health after introduction of Aapni yojna. About 05 percent people have no idea of any health improvement in their villages.

**Table 05: Health Improvement**

Response	Percent
Yes	56
No	39
No Response	05
Total	103

Source: Field Survey

### **Women's Role in Water Conservation**

The following table shows the participation of women in water conservation activities. About 76 percent people agreed about the cooperation and participation of water conservation activities. Only few persons were disagree about the role of women in water conservation activities i. e. 15 percent in study area. The details are as given below.

**Table 06: Role of Women's in Water Conservation**

Response	Percent
Yes	76
No	15
No Response	09
Total	100

Source: Field Survey

### **Social Prestige**

The project area had suffered from water scarcity, low rainfall, deep ground water and poor availability of surface water make problem critical. The water supply, sanitation and health education project called Aapni Yojna being implemented in the study area has done remarkable job in involving communities. Now people are getting fresh and sweet water regularly. The following table shows that 67 percent people o feel that their social prestige has been increased after introduction of Aapni yojna and availability of fresh and sweet water. Before this project their marriage's and social relation was very poor. Now a days social relation has been increased and there is no problem of marriage of their son and daughter. The following table shows the level of increased of social prestige.

**Table 07: Social Prestige**

Response	Percent
Yes	67
No	21
No Response	12
Total	100

Source: Field Survey

### **Collection of User Charges**

The WHCs have managed to collect and deposit the water collection charges from individual household. The villagers have been regularly paying for the water consumed by them and there has been no major problems reported towards collection and deposit of user charges by the WHCs to PMC. This is a big achievement and good example of financial self-sustainability of community-based rural water supply and sanitation scheme in India. Not only the government is free from providing subsidies, but also the committees are using their own funds for operation and maintenance, extending the physical infrastructure and social development work in the village and reaching towards a more quality of life.

## **Conclusion**

Water is being managed as an economic asset rather than a free commodity in the project area. The Aapni Yojna has created modern water supply infrastructure and institutionalized community participation in northwestern Rajasthan. A highlight of this project is the availability of water, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. The village has been considered as a focal point for water development. In Aapni Yojna emphasis has been laid on stakeholders' participation at all levels, from planning, design, location, implementation and management. The user representation and community participation have been institutionalized in introducing, implementation and management of user charges for water under the Aapni Yojna. As the concluding remarks, it is said that such kind of successes can be replicated in other sectors also provided a proper modal of community participation is adopted. Primarily the focus should be given to strengthen the packages of services and technical plan. Both of these two should be designed to serve the need of people in a right manner. Second important thing is to involve the people in planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of the system. The functionaries must have a faith in the capacity of target communities. A sense of ownership for the system needs to be developed in the target communities. At community level, the existing community groups such as users group, women groups and SHGs should be continued in the proposed structure. Their major role should be involving them in local level reviewing and ensuring community's involvement in planning, organizing, managing the user charges for water. At the village's level, the existing role in the collection and management of village level fund. Further, it is recommended to strengthen their capacity and strength in collection and management of user charges through capacity building programmes. The Pani Panchayat should work at the cluster level for coordinating and reviewing the user charges.

## **References**

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