



COCO Water Supply Management System Ensures Safe Drinking Water at Doorstep

Community Owned and Community Operated (COCO) Model for safe water supply started operations in Madore, Orchha on 29th November and it was inaugurated on 19th December, 2018. Village Madore, Orchha district, is home to a population of about 3,000, among which 38 families belong to the Ahirwar community. The village is situated on hilly terrain; the problem of water shortage that plagues much of the rest of Bundelkhand is exacerbated here because of this, owing to the lack of appropriate infrastructure to carry water to a high altitude.

In this model, safe water is drawn from a water source by a solar-powered motor (2 HP), which is carried by a pipeline to a 225 feet-deep water tank in the village. A pipeline is installed and community stand post taps (15 in total) are connected for the use of 3 households per stand post. Each household made a contribution of INR 1,000 to create a common pool of funds for the construction of the water tank. The community pooled in their resources as labourers for the construction of the system. A maintenance fee of INR 50 per month is collected from each household; this fee also covers the cost of 4 households that cannot afford this monthly expense. The COCO system is estimated to save 120 hours per person per month, time that would otherwise have been spent fetching water from further away - especially for women, who are usually in charge of this task.

A village water committee comprising 38 men and women has been formed to ensure the fair operation and utilisation of the system. The committee appoints an operator for the system, and decisions on spending funds from the collective maintenance fund are taken by the committee. The COCO model is based on the principles of initiating community-led action, creating a sense of community ownership of services and accountability. Together, these principles make it a sustainable model and ensure equitable distribution of basic services and benefits, sanitation, health and a positive effect on income.

The Ahirwar community of Madore first heard about COCO from their neighbouring tribal community. They made their water tank stronger by constructing it using cement instead of plastic, as done by the tribal community. The residents of Madore are excited about finally getting access to safe drinking water and are likely to spread the word to other villages in their area.