

MODEL BYLAWS FOR VILLAGE WATER AND SANITATION COMMITTEE

Village Water and Sanitation Committee of village
Panchayat Panchayat union of district. Approved by the
village Panchayath / 2023/

1. Jurisdiction

1. The jurisdiction of the committee is limited to the villages and hamlets within the village Panchayat.

2. Objectives

1. The Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) shall assist the Village Panchayat in effective management of water supply and sanitation facilities in the panchayat village as a legal entity recognised by the Gram Sabha.
2. The VWSC shall be a forum for community involvement in water and sanitation issues and provide a link between the Village Panchayat and the users of water and sanitation installation in the panchayat villages.

3. Status and constitution

- i. The VWSC shall function as a Standing/Statutory Committee for the Village Panchayat. It will have 10 – 15 members.
- ii. The VWSC shall include all the members of the Village Panchayat (or) as decided by Gram Sabha but it shall include all the ward members. The VWSC shall also include representatives of the local level formal/informal organisations e.g. Water User Groups-NGOs-Self Help Groups and Governmental Staff like School Teachers and Health Workers as decided by the Grama Sabha.
- iii. The Gram Panchayat Secretary (*Patwari / Talati*) shall act as the secretary of the VWSC. It will be headed by the Panchayat President (Sarpanch) / Up-sarpanch / traditional village head / senior village leader as the Gram Sabha may decide. S/he will be the chairperson.
- iv. Of the members of the VWSC it shall be ensured that not less than 50% are women and not less than 25% belong to weaker sections such as SC/ST.
- v. All the members other than panchayat members shall be selected by the Grama Sabha.

- vi. If stand-alone water supply systems are planned in scattered settlements/habitations, a user group is to be formed in such settlements / habitations. Such groups will draw powers from, and be accountable to VWSC / Paani Samiti as the case may be.
- vii. All the members of the VWSC will work purely on a voluntary basis and will not be eligible for any sort of allowance, fees (or) honorarium for working in this committee.

4. The Term

- a. Ordinarily, the tenure of VWSC may be kept at 2 – 3 years, unless the Gram Sabha feels it must be reconstituted in between for some reason. When the functioning of the VWSC is smooth, the term of VWSC members shall become coterminous only with the term of office of the elected body (the Village Panchayat).
- b. In the absence of a Village Panchayat the term of the VWSC shall continue until a new VWSC is constituted by the newly elected Village Panchayat.
- c. Individual members can resign from or be appointed to the VWSC after approval by the Grama Sabha during the Term.

5. Power of the Committee.

- i. The VWSC shall have powers to take action on behalf of the Village Panchayat relating to Water Supply and Sanitation.
- ii. The Village Panchayat shall compile a report on actions taken and recommendations given by the VWSC and apprise the Grama Sabha during its meeting to be held on 15th August; 2nd October; 26th January; 1st May of every year.
- iii. The VWSC shall perform duties and functions as described in the Constitution and in By laws representing Water Supply and Sanitation.
- iv. The Village Panchayat shall consult the VWSC before effecting any decisions related to Water and Sanitation issues pertaining to the village
- v. The VWSC shall have powers to call for any information or documents relating to Water Supply and Sanitation.
- vi. The VWSC shall have powers to supervise and monitor all works related to Water Supply and Sanitation.

- vii. The VWSC shall have the powers to inspect all water and sanitation facilities and structures affecting the utilisation or functioning of such facilities in the panchayat village.
- viii. The VWSC shall have the powers to seek necessary professional advice from any government or private organisation or individual to perform its duties adequately.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of the VWSC

General and administrative responsibilities

The VWSC

- i. Shall take responsibility for all assets pertaining to water distribution and sanitation in the panchayat village.
- ii. Shall take responsibility for the management of all water and sanitation installations in the panchayat village. This includes planning, implementation, operation, maintenance, monitoring, dissemination of information and financial management.
- iii. Shall ensure preparation of Village Action Plan (VAP) for water supply schemes; and help mobilize people for PRA and FGD for situation analysis exercises.
- iv. Arrange to provide FHTC to every existing rural HH and any new HH that may emerge in future, and ensure that scattered households located away from main settlements also get sufficient quantity of safe water, preferably through FHTCs.
- v. Shall assist and support the pump operators, community motivators and health educators in their activities.
- vi. Shall be responsible for motivation and awareness campaign on health and hygiene in the village
- vii. Shall guide and collaborate with ISAs/NGOs, individuals and Self-help Groups, which are active in ensuring sustainable water and sanitation services in the village.
- viii. Shall bear the responsibilities for equitable distribution of safe drinking water at all times, prevent misuse of water for purposes such as gardening, vehicle washing, and arrangements in times of natural calamities such as droughts, floods and epidemics.
- ix. Conduct awareness campaign on judicious use of water; come up with mechanisms to ensure no misuse of water and undertake IEC campaigns with the help of ISA / NGOs / Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) Institutions.

Technical Responsibilities

The VWSC

- i. Shall undertake responsibility in the operation and maintenance of all water distribution systems; drainage lines, and influence the solid waste disposal methods to become scientific.
- ii. Shall assist the Village Panchayats in (identifying FHTC requirements in households and in public buildings such as schools, anganwadis etc.) construction supervision, purchase of materials, plumbing works and quality control.
- iii. Shall conduct regular sanitary surveys of the village.
- iv. Shall be responsible for the short-term and long-term protection of drinking water sources and the environmental sanitation in the panchayat village.
- v. Shall be responsible for the installation and administration of FHTCs for water supplyas per the terms and conditions prescribed in the Bylaws.
- vi. Facilitate third party inspection and functionality assessment of WASH facilities.
- vii. Facilitate preparation of water budgeting, and water security plans
- viii. Ensure water quality testing using Field Testing Kits (FTKs), periodic testing at laboratories & disseminate the same among community and undertake sanitary inspection. Arrange to training, and engage rural youth / students / SHGs to carry out these activities.
- ix. Hire/ arrange training of pump operators, barefoot technicians attend regular repair andmaintenance work, and operate the system.
- x. Undertake / participate in Social Audit of water supply infrastructure.

Financial responsibilities

The VWSC

- a. Shall prepare the budget relating to water and sanitation (income & expenditure) for inclusion in the budget of the village panchayat.
- b. Shall closely monitor the water and sanitation budget of the Village Panchayat so as to enhance incomes to be able to meet expenditure incurred on WASH services.
- c. Mobilise and motivate the community to contribute 5% and 10% of in-village infrastructure capital expenditure, as the case may be. The contribution may be in the form of cash and /or kind and / or labour
- d. Open bank account / use existing account of GP for community contribution and

depositing O & M service charge. In case an existing account is being used, it should be ensured that a separate ledger is to be maintained for contribution and incentive.

- e. Shall assist the VP in appointing /finding suitable candidates for the post of pump operators, hand pump mechanics, (empanel) plumbers and other persons required for operation and maintenance of Water Supply systems.
- f. Shall see that all taxes, fees and all payments related to the water and sanitation are credited to this account payments related to the O & M of water and sanitation facilities are met from this fund.
- g. Shall assist the Village Panchayat in collection of WASH service charges (utility charges) as per terms and conditions prescribed in the By-laws.

Roles and Responsibilities of the VWSC in times of natural calamities like drought,flood and epidemics

During drought conditions

The VWSC shall

- a. Ensure, adequate protected water supply is made covering the entire panchayat (Inadequate supply of water may lead to, unhygienic conditions and thereby outbreak of epidemics).
- b. Take measures for protection of sources from contamination.
- c. If groundwater is not available within the panchayat habitations procure or fetch safe water from distant sources through clean and hygienic water tankers and distribute equitably to the community in order to tide over the crisis.
- d. Ensure adequate regular chlorination of water supplied.
- e. Repair the defunct water supply installations like abandoned hand pumps, public fountains etc. Arrange to use disused open wells as recharge structures and prevent dumping of garbage into them.
- f. Shall flush / clean the bore well / tube well sources so far not utilized regularly or properly and put them into beneficial use.
- g. Restrict the usage of unsafe drinking water sources
- h. If power supply is not available make use of / hire generators for pumping water from the sources.
- i. Educate the community to use the water wisely avoiding wastage and ensure

equitable distribution of safe drinking water. No misuse tolerated. Report such cases immediately

During floods

The VWSC shall

- i. Check whether the water supply distribution main function properly and there is no mixing or intrusion of drainage or contaminated water through leaky joints.
- ii. Communicate to the community through public address systems and through social media such as WhatsApp / SMS etc. good public health and hygiene practices.
- iii. Procure adequate quantities of bleaching powder and store it safely and regular chlorinating of water.
- iv. Protect the water sources from the mixing or entering of contaminated flood water with the water sources.
- v. Restrict the usage of or close the flooded, unsafe sources.
- vi. Ensure keeping clean public amenities like urinals, toilets etc.
- vii. Ensure the school / *anganwadi* latrines are maintained clean
- viii. Take necessary action - protection measures from the menace of animals to avoid spreading of diseases

During Epidemics

VWSC shall

- i. Check the quality of water in the nearest water quality-testing laboratory and find out if water is safe to drink / any contaminants are in it.
- ii. Take immediate remedial actions to prevent contamination. If it is beyond redeemable provide safe water from distant sources.
- iii. Check whether the water supply distribution main functions properly and there are no mixing or intrusion of drainage or contaminated water through leaky joints.
- iv. Communicate to the community through public address systems / social media the ways and practices for self and public health.
- v. Procure adequate quantities of bleaching powder and store it safely for regular chlorinating of water. Arrange to train pump operators in proper chlorination methods.
- vi. In slushy, water stagnant areas spray mosquito repellents, ensure avoid water stagnation

- vii. Get adequate stock of ORS for distribution to the community
- viii. Liaise closely with medical expertise and Public Health Department.
- ix. Educate the community through mass media like TV, radio, thandora (tom-tom), social media the basic protection measures and simple treatments like boiling, Cooling, Filtering and consumption.
- x. Keep public amenities like urinals, toilets clean. Promote use of hand sanitizers especially during epidemics such as Covid-19
- xi. Ensure that that the school / *anganwadi* latrines are maintained properly, and hand wash stations in such places have soap and water arrangements.
- xii. Take necessary action-protection measures from the menace of animals to avoid spreading of diseases.

7. Meetings

- a. The VWSC shall meet at least one hour every month in order to discuss and sort out issues related to pipelines, regularity of supply, adequacy and safety of water etc.
- b. The Chairman shall call for the meetings of the committee and maintain the proceedings of the meeting
- c. The proceedings of the Committee meeting and the action taken shall be reported inthe Grama Sabha.
- d. A quorum of the VWSC shall be 50 % of the members.

Note regarding SVS and MVS:

Be it Single Village Scheme (SVS) or Multi-Village Scheme (MVS), the main operational tasks relate to in-village infrastructure, and distribution within the village. This is based on the premise that in the case of MVS water supply infrastructure outside the village Panchayat is taken care of by the PHED or RWS as the case may be. Thus, in the case of MVS, when required the VWSC shall contact the department on behalf of the Panchayat.

Dr R Ramesh
 Associate Professor, CRI
 NIRDPR, Hyderabad – 30
 rramesh.nird@gov.in

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