

Tour Report of Shri A. Bhattacharyya,
Joint Secretary, Department of Drinking Water Supply
to Himachal Pradesh during August 15-17, 2008.

I visited Himachal Pradesh during August 15-17, 2008 to discuss with the Principal Secretary, PHE Department, Chief Engineer and other PHED officials and DRDA officials about the implementation of ARWSP and TSC schemes in the State.

2. On reaching Shimla on 15.08.2008 I visited village panchayat Neen in district Shimla, some 50-60 k.ms. from Shimla.



The village panchayat Neem has 8 villages namely, Panel, Sewang, Roudi, Juhhar, Yeongadhar, Bhora, Durgapur and Meena. It has a lady sarpanch and also an ex-serviceman who is a natural leader well respected in the community. The review meeting was held at the village school and the entire village panchayat representatives, representatives of the village Mahila Mandal, the ex-serviceman and other leading persons from the village were present. Since it was a holiday, the school toilets were locked. However I was shown the village water supply scheme as well as the community village toilets. However, I noted that there were separate toilets for boys and girls and the entire school compound was neat and tidy. There was a rain water harvesting system in the school which was used for running the toilet. I asked the village panchayat to construct rain water harvesting structures for meeting the drinking water needs of the school also. The village panchayat readily agreed to construct this facility in the near future in the school.

3. The village had got first prize of Rs. 10.00 lakh from the State Government under Maharishi Balmiki Swachhata scheme for excellent work in sanitation.



This village has also applied for Nirman Gram Puraskar this year. As it was raining heavily I could not visit the individual household latrines.

4. Later I visited the house of a village panchayat member nearby who had developed a household based rain water harvesting structure in

which rain water from the roof top is collected through down pipe in an under ground chamber.





Water then is allowed to flow down through gravity to a surface based system (trough) for meeting the drinking water needs of animals as the household as lots of animals for agriculture purpose. This water is used for irrigation purpose also for nearby fields. The household also has developed a surface based water source whereby water is collected in a nearby pond which is also used for irrigating agricultural fields nearby. The engineers accompanying me gave certain advice to the village

panchayat member as to how to make rain water harvesting structure more effective.

5. On the evening of 16.08.2008, I had a review meeting with Chief Engineer, PHED and other officials to discuss about district-wise coverage of habitations under Bharat Nirman. During this meeting and also during the meeting with the Principal Secretary, PHED, HP, later on, the importance of rain water harvesting structure and gravity based water supply system were stressed by me.

6. On 17.08.2008, I visited the village panchayat Noni in Solan district which is about 20 k.m. from Solan. This village panchayat has five villages and the total population is not more than 1,000. The villages are located at heights. The village sarpanch met me at a school in a small town. The school has built separate toilets for boys and girls. The school has huge rain water harvesting structure and collects rain water from hills and stores it in an underground chamber below the school compound. The entire water supply for the school is supplied from this system. This village panchayat had also obtained Nirmal Gram Puraskar in 2007.



The Nirmal Gram logo and citation had been painted on the wall of the rain shelter on the main road.





Near this rain shelter there is incinerator using local technology for waste disposal including plastic.



The village panchayat is already training other village panchayats who are trying to obtain NGP. In this year the village panchayat has obtained the State Govt. sanitation award, Maharishi Balmiki Swachhata of Rs. 5.00 lakh as they are number one in Shimla Division of the State of H.P.



When I enquired as to whether the village panchayat will be interested in becoming village resource centre for training other villages in TSC under

our programme, the Sarpanch expressed total agreement as he is already doing it for the State Government. The village panchayat has prepared a CD detailing their activities under water supply, sanitation, non-conventional energy, including biogas, solar lights, improved agriculture practices etc.
