

CHAPTER II
INSTITUTIONAL
FRAMEWORK AND
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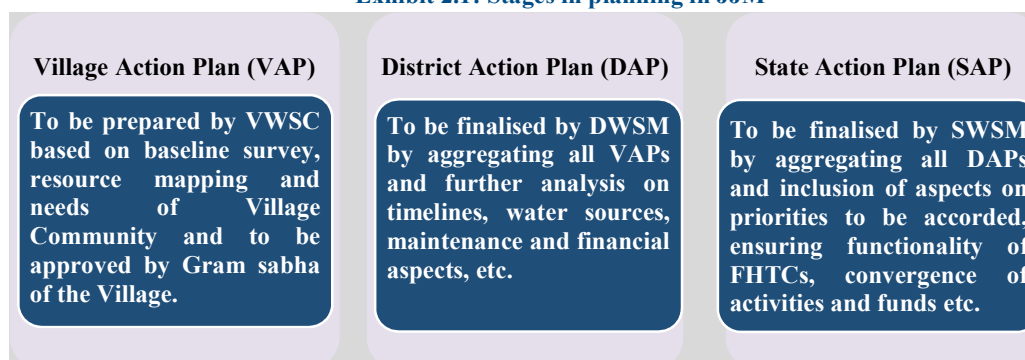
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND PLANNING

Due to non-conduct of the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) meetings, the Village Action Plans were formulated without any need assessment which impacted the implementation of scheme. The District Water and Sanitation Mission in the selected districts did not conduct the prescribed number of meetings during 2019-24. No baseline survey was conducted to confirm the actual requirements of the VPs resulting in cancellation of works. Lack of synchronisation in the works executed by the implementing agencies viz., TWAD Board and RD&PR Department was noticed.

2.1 Institutional framework under Jal Jeevan Mission

The Operational Guidelines of JJM laid emphasis on strategised planning to implement the various components aimed at providing FHTCs to all rural households. Action plans at Village, District and State levels, specifying the modalities for implementation, activities to be taken up, output to be achieved etc., were to be prepared and finalised as detailed in **Exhibit 2.1**.

Exhibit 2.1: Stages in planning in JJM



The Annual Action Plan (AAP) emerges from the SAP, detailing physical and financial targets for the year and is approved by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), GoI. The planning strategy was also reiterated in the State specific guidelines for JJM.

2.2 Functioning of the Village Water and Sanitation Committee

The Village Action Plan (VAP) is a comprehensive document addressing a village's needs, including provision of FHTCs for all rural households. As per JJM guidelines, VAPs are to be prepared by the Gram Panchayat or its sub-committees, such as the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC), based on baseline surveys and community needs. The VAP outlines fund requirements, timelines, greywater treatment, reuse plans and surveillance

activities. All drinking water-related works in the village have to follow the VAP for coordination and efficiency.

In Tamil Nadu, GoTN issued orders (July 2005) establishing various Committees for VPs, including 'Development Committee'. Post the implementation of JJM, GoTN issued orders in March 2020 stating that the said 'Development Committee' would also act as the VWSC for JJM implementation, for managing water supply schemes, planning, execution, and maintenance of the infrastructure created as well as preparing the VAP for addressing water availability, quality, and FHTC needs.

- To an Audit questionnaire on the formation of VWSCs in the selected VPs, 52 of the 60 selected VPs stated that the VWSCs were formed in their VPs.
- Audit scrutiny of records revealed that in Viluppuram District, the VWSC were established in the ten sampled VPs during 2021-22. However, each of the committees in these villages has held only one meeting (i.e., at the time of formation). On this being pointed out, the Block Development Officers (BDOs) of selected Blocks replied that action will be taken to monitor the members of the respective committee to conduct the meeting periodically.
- In Ramanathapuram District, VWSC was formed only in 2023, and, no meetings were conducted after its formation.
- Similar issues were noticed in the selected VPs of Salem District, wherein it was observed that the VWSCs were non-functional.

Due to non-conduct of the VWSC meetings, the VAPs were formulated without any need assessment or baseline survey, which impacted the implementation of scheme.

2.3 Deficiencies in preparation of Village Action Plans

As per the JJM Dashboard data for Tamil Nadu, Village Action Plan (VAP) was prepared for 11,558 VPs (92.29 *per cent*) against the total of 12,525 VPs in the State. In the sampled districts, test-check of nine VAPs revealed the following:

- Figures relating to population, number of households and corresponding water requirement did not align with the water sources in any of the nine villages.
- Grey-water management (in terms of soak pits/ waste stabilization pond) was overlooked in the action plans.
- Three¹ out of the nine VAP documents did not adhere to the prescribed format of the Operational Guidelines and none of the VAP documents were properly signed².

¹ Gohilapuram, Nagayagoundanpatty and Sillamarathupatti.

² By chairperson, Public Health Engineering Department/Rural Water Supply official & Implementation Support Agency representative.

- Although all the nine villages declared that resource mapping and social mapping were done, the maps were not attached to the VAP.
- In one village viz., Gohilapuram of Theni district, while community contribution was incorporated in the VAP, during JPV it was noticed that villagers were unwilling to contribute towards the project cost which resulted in the cancellation of proposed works.
- The other selected VPs did not formulate any comprehensive VAP and merely projected the information uploaded in the portal as the VAP for implementation of JJM in the Village.

The last mile work execution (in-village components) and SVS are the responsibilities of the VPs. In the absence of a comprehensive baseline survey and need assessments, the VAPs formulated did not reflect the actual requirements, which in turn impacted the execution of works as discussed in **Paragraph 2.5.1.**

2.4 Functioning of District Water and Sanitation Mission

As per the JJM Operational Guidelines of GoI, the District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) in the Districts are responsible for the preparation, finalisation and implementation of District Action Plans (DAPs), based on which the State Action Plan is consolidated. The DWSM also monitors and evaluates the physical and financial performance of the district in JJM, apart from grievance redressal.

GoTN issued orders (March 2020) constituting DWSM in all districts with the District Collector as Chairman. This was amended (April 2020) and a District level Project Management Unit (PMU) was set up with the Project Director, DRDA as the head.

The JJM Operational Guidelines stipulates that the DWSM will convene monthly meetings to consider and accord Administrative approval for in-village water supply schemes, grey water management, etc. Mission Director, TWAD stated (October 2024) that DAPs were formulated for all the 37 districts in the State (excluding Chennai) and had been included in the State Action Plan (SAP). However, Audit scrutiny revealed that none of the six selected districts had conducted the mandated 12 meetings per year during the years 2019-20 to 2023-24. The details of meetings held are detailed in **Table 2.1.**

Table 2.1: Details of DWSM meetings conducted in selected districts

District	Date of formation	Number of Meetings conducted	Date(s) of Meeting(s)
Coimbatore	12-05-2020	3	Details not furnished
Nagapattinam	22-04-2020	2	22-04-2020 and 17-03-2022
Ramanathapuram	20-03-2020	2	25-02-2021 and 04-03-2022
Salem	06-04-2020	4	09-02-2021, 26-02-2021, 07-03-2022 and 06-05-2022
Theni	28-04-2020	1	13-01-2022
Viluppuram	30-04-2020	3	21-09-2020, 27-11-2021 and 07-11-2022

(Source: DRDA Records)

Audit observed that non-conduct of regular meetings indicated poor monitoring at the District Level.

2.4.1 Functioning of the State Water and Sanitation Mission

As per the GoI Operational Guidelines, the State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) is a state level institution provided with necessary powers for successful implementation of JJM. The SWSM would have an Apex Committee and an Executive Committee.

The Apex Committee would be headed by the Chief Secretary of the State with Secretaries in-charge of Rural Water Supply, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Primary Education, Health, Finance, Planning, Information and Public Relations and a Government of India representative as members. The Apex Committee shall provide policy guidance, be responsible for the overall planning, strategizing and implementation of JJM in the State and be responsible for finalisation of State Action Plan to provide FHTC to every rural household by 2024 among other things.

As per the details furnished by the Mission Director, TWAD Board, the State Action Plan for Tamil Nadu was finalised during October 2021 based on the DAPs from 37 districts and was approved by GoI in November 2021. The SAP was prepared to saturate all rural households by providing FHTCs in Tamil Nadu with 99 numbers of retrofitting CWSS, 78 numbers of new MVS and SVS where local sources were sustainable.

The GoI guidelines stipulate that Apex Committee would meet at least twice a year and if possible, quarterly. However, Audit noticed that the Apex Committee in Tamil Nadu had not met even once during the year 2023-24. Review of minutes of the meetings conducted revealed that there was no formal mechanism such as documented action taken reports, timelines for implementation, review of previous decisions etc. These deficiencies indicate the lack of continuous monitoring and resultant delays in completion of the projects.

2.5 Issues in Planning of works under JJM

TWAD Board is entrusted with the development of Water Supply and Sewerage facilities in the State of Tamil Nadu, except Chennai Metropolitan Development Areas. Apart from this, maintenance of major CWSS/MVS works is also its responsibility. The responsibility for development of in-village infrastructure under the scheme rests with RD&PR Department.

The GoTN guidelines on JJM states that planning must be based on the water demand and potential of water availability. If the ground water was of prescribed quality and could meet the demand for next 30 years, SVS/Retrofitting Schemes were to be proposed and where sufficient groundwater was not available, MVS were to be proposed. Audit observations in planning are discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.5.1 Planning of works executed by RD&PR Department

The VAP is a comprehensive document addressing a village's needs, including provision of FHTCs for all rural households. All drinking water-related works in the village have to follow the VAP for coordination and efficiency. The following deficiencies were noticed in planning of JJM works in the VPs.

2.5.1.1 Works executed without need assessment - Ramanathapuram

In the test-checked VPs, Audit noticed that VWSC was formed only in the year 2023 after a lapse of three years. Further, neither the regular committee meetings were held nor a survey conducted to assess the actual village-level requirements. As a result of this, there was misalignment with the needs of the community as discussed below:

- In July 2020, DRDA, Ramanathapuram, sanctioned ₹3.51 crore for 12 works for Periyapattinam VP in Thiruppullani Block and Work orders were issued in September 2021. However, out of the 12 sanctioned works, only four were initiated, while the remaining eight were cancelled prior to commencement. The expenditure on these works is given in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Details of works in Thiruppullani Block

(₹ in lakh)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimate	Expenditure
1	Providing FHTC, pumping main line, construction of 30,000 litre OHT and extension of pipeline at Mutharayarnagar village in Periyapattinam VP	18.60	3.88
2	Providing FHTC, pumping main line and extension of pipeline at Karuchankundu village in Periyapattinam VP	8.48	7.36
3	Providing FHTC, pumping main line, construction of 30,000 litre OHT and extension of pipeline at Mangamapuram village in Periyapattinam VP	31.29	7.56
4	Providing FHTC, pumping main line, construction of 30,000 litre OHT and extension of pipeline at South Kudiyiruppu village in Periyapattinam VP	21.50	6.67
Total		79.87	25.47

(Source: DRDA, Ramanathapuram)

The four works were subsequently halted due to objections from the local community stating that JJM was not required as their village was already having access to potable water. Thus, due to absence of VWSC, the works were taken up without need assessment. Government replied (July 2025) that the works were taken up only after proper analysis of VAP. However, during execution, the people of the village were against the scheme and were not convinced even after peace committee meetings which resulted in cancellation of the works. The reply pointed to the fact that there were deficiencies in the planning of works in VAP.

- In July 2020, DRDA, Ramanathapuram, sanctioned ₹95.82 lakh for the works of construction of three openwells for Thinaikulam VP in Thiruppullani Block. During JPV in Thiruppullani Block in September 2024, Audit noticed that all the three wells were not put to use after construction (Exhibit 2.2). The Secretary, Thinaikulam VP stated that at the time of commencement of work, the local residents had requested the Department not to proceed with digging the well in the designated area as the groundwater in the area was salty and non-potable and would render the project unsuitable for their needs. Despite the above, the well was constructed but remained unused by the VP due to the non-potable nature of the water. Government also stated (July 2025) that Mission Director will pursue in taking action against the erring officials for not finding suitable source of potable water supply.

Exhibit 2.2: Open well at Thinaikulam VP not used



Thus, as JJM is a community managed Mission, the failure in ensuring participatory planning, culminating in misalignment with the actual needs of the community resulted in non-achievement of objective besides unfruitful expenditure on construction of borewells and wasteful expenditure on the halted works.

2.5.1.2 Improper estimate of FHTCs requirement - Theni

Theni district was one of the 'Har Ghar Jal' reported districts of Tamil Nadu. Audit test-checked the records relating to 18 works sanctioned by DRDA, Theni under JJM in 2020-21. These works included providing FHTCs to households in two³ Blocks. In the approved estimates for these works, it was proposed to provide 4,339 FHTCs. However, upon execution, only 1,723 connections were actually provided, amounting to just 40 per cent of the target outlined in the estimates. The details of the FHTCs proposed in the estimates and the FHTCs actually provided are given in **Appendix 2.1**.

Audit cross-verified the JJM dashboard data for the works taken up in these habitations and it was noticed that both the coverage of habitations in both the blocks were shown as 100 per cent in the dashboard. Also, as per the dashboard data, no other works were taken up in these habitations indicating that the actual requirement of FHTCs in these blocks were only 1,723 whereas the proposal was for 4,339 FHTCs. A complete baseline survey of available connections during the preparation of VAP would have aided in identification of existing tap connections. This omission led to the overestimation of the actual number of

³ Periyakulam and Uthamapalayam Blocks.

FHTCs required in the village, directly impacting the accuracy of estimates and the subsequent execution of work under JJM.

Government replied (April 2025) that many beneficiaries showed interest to use their own source and as such FHTC was provided to the remaining households. Further, it was also replied that more number of illegal connections had to be regularised while executing the FHTC works. The reply indicated the fact that the actual requirement of FHTCs and the availability of tap connections were not taken into account before proposing the works.

2.5.1.3 Works taken up without survey - Coimbatore

As per the details furnished by DRDA, Coimbatore, out of 1,074 in-village works sanctioned in the District during 2020-24, 945 works were completed and the pendency was stated as 129 works as of January 2025. A scrutiny of records revealed that all the pending 129 works were cancelled vide the proceedings of the District Collector, Coimbatore. Audit noticed that six of these works were cancelled based on the request of BDO(VP) and on the grounds that FHTCs were already available in the households proposed to be covered under these works. This indicated that no survey or planning was done before proposal of works.

2.5.1.4 Incorrect estimation of requirement - Nagapattinam

Audit test-checked the estimates and Completion Reports of three works in Nagapattinam District which revealed variations between estimates and the actual execution as given in **Table 2.3**.

Table 2.3: Discrepancies in the number of proposed and installed FHTCs in Nagapattinam District

Habitation	Extension of pipeline (EPL) (in metres)		Number of FHTCs		
	Proposed	Executed (increase in per cent)	Proposed	Installed	Not installed (in per cent)
Mela pudhupalli Therkku, Pudupalli VP	3,900	4,704 (20.62)	218	181	37 (16.97)
Keela pudhupalli Vadakku, Pudupalli VP	4,700	5,311 (13.00)	192	155	37 (19.27)
Pootchi Theru, Pirathaba ramapuram VP	4,050	5,005 (23.58)	259	189	70 (27.00)

(Source: Compiled by Audit)

Audit noticed that, the length of the pipeline was increased between 13 per cent and 24 per cent of the estimated length. However, in order to keep the expenditure within the estimate, the provision of FHTCs was reduced. Audit noticed similar issue during review of the completion reports for thirteen works executed in Thalanayar and Keelaiyur Blocks during 2023-24 where the extension of pipeline exceeded the approved estimate and the increase in pipeline length ranged between 6.35 per cent and 32.49 per cent of the estimated length.

Government replied (April 2025) that as the houses are geographically scattered, estimates were prepared approximately and the works were completed within the estimates. The reply is not acceptable since, the VP is a small area and the local terrain should have been properly analysed, mapped and the requirement of the correct length of the pipeline should have been estimated. Failure to do so has denied FHTCs to households.

Recommendation 1: The Government should direct the implementing agencies to take up works only after need assessments and should also ensure that estimates are prepared after taking into account the actual requirements.

2.5.2 Planning of works executed by TWAD Board

Test-check of executed works in the selected districts revealed deficiencies in planning as discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.5.2.1 Lack of synchronisation in planning - Ramanathapuram District

Consequent to launch of JJM, the following schemes/works were sanctioned for Ramanathapuram District under JJM to meet the projected requirement of rural habitations for the year 2050 at the rate of 55 lpcd:

- **In-village works:** Under AAP 2020-21, provision of FHTCs through 165 in-village component works (June 2020) at an estimated cost of ₹32.93 crore.
- **Retrofitting of existing Ramanathapuram CWSS:** Under AAP 2022-23, retrofitting of existing CWSS at a cost of ₹574.42 crore was taken up (July 2022) with target for completion by October 2024.

As TWAD Board and RD&PR Department are involved in the execution of works, proper planning and synchronisation of scheme components by these departments would ensure that the intended objectives of JJM are achieved. However, Audit noticed that:

- Despite reiteration in Operational Guidelines of GoTN to prioritise proposal for MVS in case of non-availability of sufficient groundwater, in-village works were proposed and taken up in AAP 2020-21 before finalisation of source augmentation works (CWSS/MVS) which were taken up only in AAP 2022-23.
- As of May 2025, the retrofitting work of existing CWSS was under progress while the assets under in-village components were completed by February 2023. Thus, the infrastructure developed under the 165 in-village works remains largely unused.
- During JPV, test check of three Over Head Tanks (OHTs) and 12 sumps constructed in the Thiruvadanai Block revealed that seven sumps were not receiving water and water was not pumped to the OHTs. In the remaining five sumps water was supplied from local source only once in a week. BDO (VP) stated that the infrastructure would be put to use once the TWAD Board works were completed.

Thus, failure of the sanctioning authority to assess the availability of water for the district or the progress of source creation work before sanctioning the in-village components indicated poor planning and non-synchronisation of head-works and in-village component.

The Government replied (April 2025) that all the works of retrofitting in Ramanathapuram CWSS would be completed by September 2025 and the delay was due to interlinking of new pipes without affecting the regular supply to the public. Further, it was also replied that in-village components are being used with the water quantity supplied through CWSS.

Recommendation 2: The Government should ensure effective synchronisation in works executed by the implementing agencies so as to avoid delays in utilisation of assets created in the in-village components.

2.5.2.2 Improper planning of works - Coimbatore District

In Coimbatore District, the 'CWSS to 295 habitations' scheme providing water supply to the rural habitations was commissioned in 2005 and maintained by the TWAD Board since February 2006. Under this CWSS, treated surface water sourced from the Aliyar River was pumped through two alignments - Alignment I serving 165 habitations and Alignment II serving 130 habitations. The total length of the pipeline was 426.36 km.

On account of road widening work by National Highways Authority, the Main Pumping lines and its branches spanning a length of 15.5 kilometres were damaged disrupting water supply to 130 habitations served by Alignment II. To ensure uninterrupted water supply, GoTN accorded (April 2022) Administrative approval for ₹47.37 crore⁴ for retrofitting work under JJM in 2021-22 to replace the damaged pipes. The work was completed in March 2024. TWAD Board reported (September 2024) that regular water supply was restored.

Scrutiny of records revealed that the habitations in Kinathukkadavu Block were receiving only 2.969 Million Litre per Day (MLD) in 2024, against the earmarked quantity of 5.084 MLD. Moreover, this was a significant drop from the quantity of 4.367 MLD received by these habitations in 2022 before the retrofitting work. During JPV (September 2024 and March 2025) numerous leaks and bursts were observed (**Exhibit 2.3**) in the main pumping lines which affected the quantity of water supplied. Further, scrutiny of the maintenance records on TWAD Board revealed that leaks and bursts were present in the pipeline system.

⁴ ₹9.53 crore for TWAD component and ₹38.70 crore for RD&PR component.

Exhibit 2.3: Water Stagnation due to leaks in pipelines



Incidentally, it was noticed that a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the work of immediate replacement of pipes for a length of 28.27 km was prepared (November 2024) at an estimated cost of ₹51 crore, on account of leaks and bursts in the pumping line due to ageing of pipes (as they were laid before 20 years) and its wear and tear.

In this regard, Audit observed the following:

- TWAD Board failed to comprehensively identify the leaks and bursts in the pipeline while planning for the retrofitting work in 2022. The proposal focussed only on the extent of pipeline damaged by road widening works.
- On account of compartmentalised handling of issues, leakage continued to plague the pipeline and consequent water supply.
- Due to lack of holistic planning, the habitations in the tail-end block of the scheme received reduced quantity of water even after the completion of works. Moreover, these habitations had received a comparatively higher supply before the retrofitting work.

Thus, deficiency in planning led to ineffective implementation of the scheme as the issue of leakage in pipes continued to affect the supply lines leading to deprivation of adequate quantity of water supply to the tail-end beneficiaries.

The Government replied (April 2025) that the designated quantity would be supplied to all habitations including the tail-end habitations once the work of replacement of pipes and pump sets was complete. Thus, even after six years of JJM and expenditure on retrofitting works, sufficient water supply could not be ensured.