

# **A Case Study on Madamakki Gram Panchayat**

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## **Best Practices of Panchayats**

**Commissioned by:**



**Ministry of Panchayat Raj**  
Government of India  
Kasturba Gandhi Road  
New Delhi

**Case Study Documented by:**



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## **Acknowledgements**

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This Case Study has been prepared based on the proposal submitted by Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bangalore as per the call for expression of interest and proposal by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj (MOPR) Government of India.

We wish to thank Ministry of Panchayat Raj (MoPR), Government of India for funding the preparation of this case study. We are grateful to Ms V. Rashmi, Secretary to Government of Karnataka, Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj and Dr Ekanthappa, Chief, Gram Swaraj Project for facilitating the study.

We would like to particularly thank the elected body, Panchayat Development Officer, Secretary and all the staff of and the villagers of Madamakki Gram Panchayat for their immense support in providing data and giving their time and sharing their experiences.

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**April 2013**  
**Bangalore**

**Center for Budget and Policy Studies**



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## Abbreviation

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BPL	Below Poverty Line
DHO	District Health Officer
GP	Gram Panchayat
KM	Kilo meter
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MLC	Member of the Legislative Council
MoPR	Ministry of Panchayati Raj
NH	National Highway
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
OSR	Own Source Revenue
PDO	Panchayat Development Officer
PDS	Public Distribution System
PEAIS	Panchayat Empowerment Accountability Incentive Scheme
PRI	Panchayat Raj Institution
SC	Scheduled Caste
SDMC	School Development & Monitoring Committee
SHG	Self Help Group
ST	Scheduled Tribe
THO	Taluk Health Officer
TP	Taluk Panchayat
ZP	Zilla Panchayat

## **Case Study of Madamakki Gram Panchayat, Udupi District, Karnataka**

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### **1.0 Introduction**

In 2005-06, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India introduced the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) to incentivize States and UTs to devolve powers to local bodies. Under this scheme, the best performing State/UT is awarded Rs 2 crore every year. Further, the Ministry also announces awards for the best Zilla Panchayats, Taluk Panchayats and Gram Panchayats for their performance in implementation of flagship schemes and execution of welfare programmes.

The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) developed a Devolution Index to measure the State/PRI's performance on the basis of devolution of three F's viz. finance, functions and functionaries. The assessment is carried out in two-stages with the first stage examining whether the State/UT has created a conducive environment that enables the transfer of powers to the local bodies. Accordingly, the first stage checks whether the States have setup the District Planning Committee, established State Election Commission and State Finance Commission, and held PRI elections every five year. The Devolution Index is calculated for those States which have satisfied the criteria specified in the first stage. The three pillars in the Devolution Index capture either directly or indirectly the level of financial discretion, transfer of functions and steps taken to develop the capacity of functionaries of PRIs.

As for deciding the best panchayat at all the three levels i.e. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti (called Taluk Panchayat in Karnataka) and Zilla Parishad, it is done through a process of scoring based on the devolution index and responses to a questionnaire that capture important aspects relating to activities of a model Panchayats. Some of the parameters used include – regularity of panchayat meetings including those of gram sabha and standing committees, attendance in these meetings particularly the representation of SC and STs in the Gram Sabhas, discussions held and issues discussed, resolutions undertaken on various development works, identification of various beneficiaries, implementation of the State and Central Government schemes, efforts for achieving total sanitation, development of effective plans for raising own resources, systems for effective tax collection, strengthening of local institutions, capacity building of the elected representatives and the staff and having mechanism for transparency and accountability and so on. Madamakki Grama Panchayat of Udupi District is one of the seven panchayats selected for

award under the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) 2011-12.

## **2.0 Profile of the District**

Udupi district is located in Southern Karnataka, which was carved out of Dakshina Kannada district in 1997. The district is situated between the Western Ghats on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west. This district consists of 3 taluks, Udupi, Kundapura and Karkala. It is well known for its religious and cultural heritage. This district is popular as a pilgrim centre, where there are two major temples, Krishna and the Mookambika temple. From the district headquarters, at a distance of 50 km, there are two popular beaches, Marawanthe and St. Mary's Islands. The beaches attract the tourists from all over the world. The Udupi cuisine, synonymous with popular vegetarian food, is found all over the world.

Udupi district is the birth place for four public sector banks, Vijaya Bank, Canara Bank, Corporation Bank and the Syndicate Bank. There is a printing press in Manipal that undertakes high security printing tasks such as printing cheques, share certificates, etc. Manipal University in the district is an international educational hub, excelling in the fields of Medicine, Engineering and Management.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally this district is popular for its education where the literacy rate as per 2001 census is 81.25%.

Paddy is the main crop of this area and major fruits grown are mango, banana, pineapple, jack fruit and sapota. The district leads in cashew production and is an exporter of Jasmine flowers that are grown in the areas of Katpady and Palli

National Highways, NH 17 and NH 13 facilitate accessibility to Bangalore, Goa, Chennai and Hyderabad. The district is also well connected with major cities and towns through the Konkan Railway link. The closest Airport is Mangalore, which is 54 km from the district. This district also has fishing ports like Malpe, Hejamadi, Gangolli, etc

Tulu, Konkani, Kannada and Beary are the languages spoken here.

## **3.0 Profile of Madamakki Gram Panchayat**

Madamakki Grama Panchayat is located in Kundapura Taluk of Udupi District in Karnataka. Madamakki is at a distance of 45 Km from the Taluk headquarters and 55 Km from the district

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.advantagekarnataka.com](http://www.advantagekarnataka.com)

headquarters. This is the last panchayat of the taluk, situated at the border towards the east. The total geographical area of the GP is 6,379 hectares. The east part of this gram panchayat belongs to the reserve forest. The state highway passes through this GP and there are frequent buses passing through the panchayat. Other than light tarred roads to two villages of the GP, all other roads are mud roads.

Madamakki has two revenue villages, Madamakki and Shedimane. Total population of this area is 4223 as per 2001 census, out of which 2002 are men and 2221 are women. The total population of the scheduled castes is 108 and that of the scheduled tribes is 289. Total households are 926, out of which 19 belong to the SCs (2%) and 21 (2.3%) to the STs. Among the other castes, 35% of the households belong to the Bunt community and 22% belong to the Billava community, which are the most socio-economically well off and politically influential communities of Udupi district.

Cash crops are the major crops in this area. Rubber takes the foremost place followed by cashew, paddy and coconut. It has three cashew factories which provide job opportunities for women. The daily wage rate in this area ranges from Rs.250 to Rs.300 for men and Rs.175 to Rs. 200 for women. Besides the wage, generally the laborers are also provided with breakfast, lunch and tea/coffee with snacks in the evening. Tribals are involved in basket weaving. There are 419 BPL card holder families and among them 107 are Anthyodaya card holder families. There is enough demand for labor work all through the year.

Madamakki Gram Panchayat has 4 lower primary schools, 2 higher primary schools and 6 Anganawadis. Students have to travel for 10 Km from the panchayat in order to study in the high school. Various other offices like the government health sub centre, veterinary hospital, public library exist. Sri. Dharmasthala Gramabivrudhi Project has created 72 self help groups, out of which 31 are SHGs of men and the rest of them are women SHGs. Other than this, there are 11 more SHGs of women formed by the Department of Women and Child Welfare and 7 SHGs are formed by the Navodaya Organisation. There are 5 milk production groups formed by milk federations.

This GP has a Yakshagana troupe (theatre dance form), which is famous in the three border districts.

## **4.0 Management of Madamakki Gram Panchayat**

Madamakki Gram Panchayat has 10 elected members, where 50% are women representatives. The Gram Panchayat has full time staff including Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) and the Secretary who is appointed by the government. Besides, the Clerk, bill collector and data entry operators are appointed by the Gram Panchayat. A librarian, who is appointed by the Public Library Department also works in the GP and helps its work. There are 5 watermen, who are also called as pump men in the GP. They are contract workers.

### **Infrastructure & Systems**

Madamakki Grama Panchayat has its own building for the past 15 years, which has one meeting hall, two office rooms and a toilet. Although the building is old, the Panchayat is well equipped with two computers with internet facilities, two printers, a handy cam, a digital camera, etc. The Panchayat also has basic seating arrangements for all the staff, where they are able to work in comfort.

Attached to the GP is a community hall which is used for the Grama Sabha and other public meetings. The GP uses this community hall for conducting eye camps, blood donation camps, trainings, etc. Besides, the GP has 21 shops, which have been rented out.

Currently, the Panchayat is under the process of developing computerized management information systems. The objective of developing these facilities is to function with more speed and also to effectively monitor the day to day progress. The formats received from the government with regard to budget, tax collection, income and expenditure information, etc. are presently computerized.

### **Decision making process**

The Panchayat members conduct regular monthly meetings and discuss issues and development works of the Panchayat. The officials read all the circulars which come to gram panchayat in the meeting where the elected representatives take the decision. Officials and elected members exchange ideas with regard to development works. There is coordination between the elected members and officials in this Panchayat. In spite of having different party affiliations, the elected members take a non-partisan view on matters under consideration and focus on the areas where the development is required. The overall attendance in the GP meeting has been 80% and above. Besides monthly meetings, the GP also conducts special meetings and emergency meetings as per the need of the GP. The GP has a sound practice of holding informal meetings with the

villagers before implementing any scheme in the area. This is to take opinions of the people and involve them in the scheme implementation.

### **Transparency and Accountability:**

GP is very prompt in preparing its annual budget and annual action plan. This is the first Panchayat to submit its budget for the year 2013-14 and to obtain approval of the Executive Officer at taluk level.

The Gram Panchayat conducts the mandatory two Grama Sabhas every year as per the Act. The required documents are produced in the Gram Sabha if people raise any questions. Social audits are also conducted as per the requirement. Other than this, they also conduct Children's Grama Sabha every year. Besides these, there is also a 'Jana Samparka Sabe', which is a meeting between the taluk level officials and people of the village. Most of the time, the taluk takes the initiative to conduct this kind of meeting at the GP level. But here in this GP, sometimes the people also take the initiative to invite officials and conduct such kinds of meetings in order to address their issues. The GP also conducted an *Abakari* Grama Sabha through which, with the help of the excise department, the people wanted the GP to address the issue of alcoholism in the villages.

Required registers, books of accounts and other related documents are maintained. The resolution of the general body meetings and gram sabha are also kept. PDO and the secretary frequently visit the field to monitor the implementation of various schemes to prevent any malpractice. While visiting the field they ensure to track the progress over the period. The information of the annual funds received for various schemes are painted on the Gram Panchayat walls.

### **Sensitivity towards Service Delivery:**

In terms of service delivery Madamakki GP is sensitive towards its people. Officials are conscious that people come to GP from faraway places and, therefore, their needs have to be addressed immediately. The needs and interests of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes are taken in to consideration while preparing and implementing the plan. For example while providing individual water supply, GP did not want to burden the SC and STs and instead used 25% scheme funds reserved for the SCs and STs.

Households of both the villages Madamakki and Shedimane have 100% Open Defecation Free villages for which GP bagged a Nirmal Gram Puraskar for total sanitation.

## **Leveraging connections to access new projects to the area**

Although the GP does not receive funds for all its requirements, its members and the staff are able to persuade the government departments to implement various projects in their area. In the year 2012-13, Namma Grama Namma Raste (Our village, Our road), a state funded project worth Rs.1.85 crores was accessed for constructing a 3.93 k.m. long road. The project was got sanctioned by using the good offices of a former MLA and this will be implemented shortly.

### **Capacity to Resource mobilization:**

Gram panchayat has immense capacity to mobilize resources from local as well as from external resources. It is mainly because the member and staff of GP have very good rapport with the people of the Gram Panchayat as well as other external institutions like banks, other departments, etc.

## **5.0 Best Practices of Madamakki Panchayat**

Madamakki Grama Panchayat has evolved and used innovative strategies in their development work. There are two main good and innovative practices that are noteworthy viz. dealing with high electricity bill through a set of interventions and, similarly, mobilizing own source revenue through some innovative practices. Besides these two, the GP showed its ingenuity and resourcefulness in several other smaller instances which are all captured under ‘other good practices’.

### **A. Reducing the high financial burden due to the electricity bill**

In Madamakki Gram Panchayat, more than 75% of the families use water from wells. This is because the houses are scattered and most of the houses are constructed in own private lands. Public wells are used by the people who live in the clustered houses (locally termed as ‘5 cents colony’). The GP has provided free public water supply through the public taps for these clustered houses since 1998. Since this involved pumping water through the day, the GP was burdened with a heavy expenditure on electricity. In the year 2006-07, the GP in its Gram Sabha sought opinion from the people with regard to its proposal of levying tax for the usage of public taps. But the people did not agree with this proposal. The members of the community felt that if the GP charged tax on public taps, the public would switch to well water. Thus, the proposal of levying tax on the public tap water users was dropped in the Grama Sabha, and also in the general meeting of the GP.

In June 2010, the newly elected body took charge of Madamakki Gram Panchayat. During the same time (in May 2010), Government of Karnataka started recruitment of Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) to assist gram panchayats in their day to day administration. Although there was a Secretary in position since 2008, he could not give full attention to Madamakki Gram Panchayat as he was in charge of two GPs. When the newly recruited PDO took charge, he observed that the outstanding bill of electricity was around Rs. 6.64 lakhs and this was overdue. He brought this to the notice of the members in the general monthly meeting. During the discussion, he also mentioned that deduction of the electricity bill amount was occurring from the statutory fund. This was also the reason for not getting the full amount. The PDO further brought to the notice of the members that every year, the GP gets an electricity bill of over Rs. 1.5 lakhs. The reason was mainly because of running the five pumps for long hours to provide the free water supply to the people through the public taps. The PDO and the panchayat members discussed that this would be a continuous burden for the GP and thus right action needed to be taken at the right time. Thus, they evolved three strategies to address these issues without hampering the pro people development initiatives.

Strategies used to address the issue:

- Repay the outstanding electricity bill from the fixed grant (statutory fund)
- To provide individual water supply connection and charging water tax for the same
- Create a pool of donors and thus ensure resource mobilization and peoples participation

### ***Step 1: Repay outstanding Electricity Bill***

As a first step, the GP representatives and the staff, with the initiative of the PDO, decided to repay the electricity bill step by step. Since the burden was heavy, they decided to reduce it as early as possible. Thus, they came up with the strategy of utilizing the untied fund and the own sources of GP. As a result, in 2011-12, they first paid the heavy amount of around Rs. 4 lakhs (see Table 1). By February 2013, they brought down the due electricity bill to nil.

<b>Table 1</b>						
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>Bill for the Current Year</b>	<b>Total Bill Outstanding</b>	<b>Bill Amount Paid</b>	<b>Balance</b>
1	2009-10	444072	231310	675382	166495	508887
2	2010-11	508887	155898	664785	260000	404785
3	2011-12	404785	95436	500221	413058	87163
4	2012-13	87163	99169	186332	186332	0

During the entire period, in every meeting, the members and the PDO along with the panchayat staff held detailed discussions. There was a good amount of understanding and cooperation between the PDO and the elected members with regard to freeing the Panchayat from the heavy electricity amount that was due to be paid. The fact that there was no disagreement from any of the members helped the GP to succeed. To sustain this process, they decided to implement the second step of providing individual water connections to the people, levy tax for the same and thus manage the payment of electricity bill through the income gained from the water tax.

### ***Step 2: Provide individual water connections***

The panchayat members and the PDO discussed and debated the causes for heavy electricity bill. They recognized that this was mainly due to the public water supply through the public taps. They had 6 motor pumps that used to run all the time, since the water used to get utilized very soon by the people and there was demand for more water from the people. At the same time, they also discovered the heavy mismanagement of water by the people – e.g. not closing the tap after filling the water. Sometimes, the taps were left open while the water was not being pumped through the motors. Thus, when the water was pumped, it used to flow out from the opened taps.



After thus unraveling the issue, the PDO and the panchayat members decided to provide individual water connections instead of providing water from the public taps. This was to control the wastage of water and overuse of electricity. To this effect, they framed a bye-law in a meeting (held on 20 October 2010). All the members unanimously

agreed to the proposal of providing individual water connections to the people. They decided to disconnect all the public taps on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010. A notice was put up in all the public places informing the people that the GP is stopping public tap water supply from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.

They also put up a notice through which the people were requested to opt for individual water connections by paying Rs.300, as a deposit to the GP. The notice also had conditions like, payment of Rs. 50 for a minimum usage of up to 6000 litres of water, using the water meter with ISI mark, etc. Since the GP members had good rapport with the public, they could persuade them to choose individual connections over public taps. As a result, people started requesting the GP for individual connections. As decided, the GP had disconnected all the public taps within the GP area on 31 December 2010 excepting those in SC & ST colonies.

Some people did object to this and argued that it was the responsibility of the panchayat to provide free water supply. The PDO presented documentary evidence to show the outstanding electricity bills and explained how the GP was burdened with the heavy electricity bill due to free water supply. Most of the people, who were depending on the public water supply agreed to take individual connections. But they suggested that the panchayat should not force all the people to go in for individual water connections as some people will opt to use their own wells. They also suggested that the tax for individual water connection needs to be reduced.

At the same time, the GP had to address the needs of people belonging to the underprivileged sections like the SCs and STs. The elected body with the help of PDO and the panchayat staff decided to provide individual connections, wherever possible, through the *25% fund reserved for the welfare of the SC and ST communities*. Utilizing this fund, the GP provided individual water connections to 8 SC families and 5 ST families. In other areas, the GP has retained the public taps and in some places the people use their own well water. This is due to topography of this area, where the houses are scattered.

### **Challenges faced due to the provision of individual connections**

When the GP was able resolve one issue, they had to face another issue within the year. The pump men were given responsibilities of reading the meters of individual houses and produce the water bill every month, to all those houses that had individual water connections. Water men used to undertake frequent monitoring of water usage by the individual houses. During such monitoring, they observed that the people were adopting malpractices with regard to the water meters. For example, in many places they found that the meters had become dysfunctional and were showing wrong readings. People had tampered with the water meter and thus it was easy for them make the water meter dysfunctional.

The GP had to resolve this issue. At the same time, the GP bagged the PEAIS award for best

### Award Money

Madamakki received Rs.13 lakh under PEAIS. When they knew that they would be receiving this amount, they prepared an action plan which addressed an important and felt need of the people. But the money came with a State Government guideline that it should be used for any of the eight purposes e.g. solar water pumps, solar street lights, development of rural market water meter connection, etc. This was a major disappointment for the GP where they could not use the money as per their plan. More over the recommended works under the guidelines were not suitable for their area. The GP feels that the award money which comes with such stipulations hinders the GP from taking decisions keeping the local needs in view.

performance. As part of the award, the GP received a cash prize of Rs.13 lakhs. The GP, based on the needs of the villages, had plans to repair the roads. This was also crucial because the GP had forest areas and faced heavy rain. But the cash prize came with *strict guidelines* with regard to its utilization by the GP. Among the permissible

items on which cash prize could be spent was meter connection for individual houses. Using the cash prize GP provided jet magnetic meter for all the houses that got individual water connections, and thus resolved the issue of misuse of meter connection. GP is conscious of not creating dependency on GP to provide meters in the future. The GP also learnt and now strongly feels that there is a need for change of certain policies while formulating guidelines for the GPs; for instance, giving an opportunity for GPs to utilize such cash awards for development work based on the need of the villages is important.

### Step 3: Concept of Streetlight Donation and Adoption

The GP had 26 street light poles, in 5 areas of the two villages of Madamakki and Shedimane. Since the area faced heavy rain (the area is 10 km from Agumbe, which experiences one of the highest rainfall in the country), heavy lightning and thunder is very common. As a result, the bulbs in the street light poles used to get fused very frequently. Also, there was no system in place for switching on and switching off the



streetlights. Neither was this monitored properly. A person who was near to the switch board was entrusted with this task with the confidence that he will take responsibility to switch on and switch off the street lights on time. But this was not practically happening in the village. To address the issue of incurring heavy cost for the bulbs (sodium lights) and in order enable the people to take responsibility for their streets, the GP designed a concept wherein the village people would donate the street lights and they would own the streetlights and be responsible for them. This idea was accepted well by the youth groups, Bhajan Mandals, Milk federations etc. The groups belonging to the particular areas took responsibility and collected money from local donors and installed CFL streetlights in all the five areas.

### ***The Impact of the intervention***

As a result of using these above strategies, the GP could enjoy the following impacts:

#### **Reduction in the Electricity Bill**

Providing individual connections for 151 families resulted in lessening the financial burden of the GP, due to reduced electricity bill. The electricity bill got reduced from Rs.1.5 lakhs to Rs.95000 in the year 2011-12.

#### **Reduction in Wastage of Water**

As observed and mentioned by the village level watermen, the water used to get over very soon and they had to pump water all through the night. This used result in frequent breakdown of pumps. The cost for repairing the pumps used to be borne by the panchayat. But after providing individual water connections, the water remains in the tank even until the end of the day. Thus, the number of hours for which water has to be pumped is reduced considerably. The pump breakdown instances have reduced and thus the cost of repairing the same. Water wastage has also reduced as indicated by the fact that water remains in the water tank until the end of day. Reduction in water wastage is also because people with individual connections do not waste water as they have to pay as per their water usage.

#### **Availability of water to all the beneficiaries irrespective of the season**

Earlier people used to get water based on first come first serve basis. People who came last would never get water. The GP had fixed the timings for pumping the water to the storage tanks as well as for releasing the water through the public taps i.e. for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. Also, the water had to be released to all the beneficiaries at the same time. Due to such heavy usage of water, there was water shortage during summer and GP was not able to provide water during the months of April and May. This major problem got resolved, since

last year due to the better management of water through the practice of providing individual water connections to the people.

### **People Becoming Conscious about Water Usage**

The GP is collecting Rs.50, as tax for a minimum usage of up to 6000 litres of water. Above this, for every 1000 litres Rs.10 is charged and above 10,000 litres for every 1000 litres Rs.15 is charged. Thus, now because of the fear of getting a huge amount of bill, the people have become more conscious water usage.

### **Reduction in Complaints**

Due to the heavy usage of water, the pumps used to get repaired very frequently. As a result, the community people would not get water for around 10 days continuously as the repaired pump had to be send to the town for repairs. This used to attract frequent complaints from the people. Now the GP is not facing such frequent breakdown of pumps and thus the complaints from the people have got reduced considerably.

### **Burden Reduction for the Women**

Earlier women had to get up early in the morning and stand for long hours in the Q for fetching the water. They had to walk about half a kilometer to one kilometer to collect the water. As a result, they could not go to their work on time. But now, the women who go to the cashew factories (there are many), have fixed the time and have instructed the watermen to release the water during such fixed times. This has helped the women to go to the work on time.

### **Addressing the issues of SC & STs**

While providing the individual connections, GP has a well thought out plan for providing free public water supply to the SCs and the STs. For this, they used the 25% fund, which was reserved for the welfare of the SCs and the STs. Utilizing this fund, the GP installed the water meters and the pipeline connections from the main pipelines. The GP also ensured that the communities are paying the taxes. The poorest of the poor, SCs and the STs are still provided with public water connection by the GP.

### Sustainability by Balancing the Income and the Expenditure:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Electricity Bill for the year (in INR)</b>	<b>Income from individual water connections through the water bill (in INR)</b>	<b>Water tax from all the completed house buildings (in INR)</b>
2011-12	95436	96790	0
2012-13	99169	103279	11726

Table 2 above shows the annual electricity bill to be paid and the income from the individual water connections. Due to the individual water connection, the GP is able to balance the incomes and expenditures with regard to the electricity bill.

#### **A sense of ownership**

Due to the ownership built, the village person, who gets up first, moves to the switch board and switches off the lights. Similarly, the first person who passes by the street light in the evening switches on the light. This has created a sense of responsibility among the village people.

The GPs decision to shift from sodium lights to CFL lights has also resulted in reduced amount of electricity bill, thus resulting in reduced financial burden.

### **B. Mobilization of Own Source Revenues**

Table 3 shows the status of tax collection for about 10 years in Madamakki GP. Since 2006-07, the GP has achieved a tax collection rate of above 90%. In the year 2009-10, there was a drastic reduction in the collection of taxes (only 65%). This was because the elected body was in its last year of tenure and thus was busy in planning for the forth coming elections. Also, the secretary was in charge of two panchayats. Hence, the dependency for tax collection was only on the bill collector. But in the year 2012-13, the tax collection rate was 98%, which is over the targeted rate.

**Table -3**

Details of Tax Collection (in Rs)						
Year	Previous Balance	Current Year Target	Total Tax to be collected	Collection for the current year	% of collection	Balance to be collected
a	b	c	d = b+c	e	f=e/d*100	g
2002-03	15991	18345	34336	19660	57.3	14676
2003-04	14676	67066	81742	48551	59.4	33191
2004-05	33191	68782	101973	51135	50.1	50838
2005-06	50838	69669	120507	90609	75.2	29898
2006-07	29898	71451	101349	95848	95.0	5501
2007-08	5501	74882	80383	74604	93.0	5779
2008-09	5779	76912	82691	76901	93.0	5790
2009-10	5790	78799	84589	54616	65.0	29973
2010-11	29973	100694	130667	124305	95.0	6362
2011-12	6362	107311	113673	111679	98.2	1994

The practices that have contributed to improved tax collection in this gram Panchayat are described below:

#### **Tax Counter during the Temple Fair:**

Earlier this panchayat belonged to Belve Mandal Panchayat. After the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment was passed, Madamakki became the head quarters for the Gram Panchayat. Since the Mandal Panchayat office is far away from the village and also since there was no connectivity for the people to commute frequently through this forest area, the local leaders evolved an idea of opening a tax counter during the temple fairs. This was to facilitate easy payment of taxes by the people belonging to the GP. Also, during fairs people have money and they will not hesitate to pay up the taxes. This Panchayat has two temples called Naga Kannika Durga Parameshwari temple at Arasamma Kanu area and Veerabhadra temple at Madamakki village. Every year both the temples hold the annual temple fairs in the months of January and February. This practice of opening a tax counter is continued till today. Though the tax collection has reduced in the counter, since the GP is now closer to the people, still people continue to pay the taxes in the counter during the temple fair.

#### **Influence through the PDS Shop to Pay the Taxes**

The staff of GP is aware that only sending notices do not produce any result when it comes to collecting the taxes. Thus they use various strategies to collect the taxes. At the GP level all the people get some ration/benefits from the PDS. During the period, when the newly elected body came into existence, the PDO proposed the idea of insisting upon tax payment by the people before they got the PDS benefits. Thus, they discussed this idea with the PDS owners and asked

the PDS owners to ascertain that the people have paid the tax by viewing their tax receipt before providing the ration. However, no force was applied to pay the taxes. Neither was the benefit from the PDS denied, when the tax was not paid. But there was motivation like when a person came to the PDS, the ration shop person would enquire, whether she/he has paid the house tax. If the response was yes, the ration shop person would ask the person to show the receipt when he/she came to the PDS shop, the next time. If not then, they would give the ration but urged them to pay the tax and bring the receipt when they came next time to the PDS shop. This strategy worked very well in this Panchayat and as a result, the panchayat was able collect 98% of the taxes.

### **Collection of Tax is not the responsibility of only the Bill Collector**

In this GP, tax collection is not the responsibility of only the bill collector. The PDO, secretary, clerk and the bill collector work as a team. Whoever comes to meet any of these people, either for some certificate or even generally, gets motivated by them to pay the taxes. This process is carried out every day.

### **Sense of responsibility among the Panchayat Members, Staff and the people**

Traditionally, the people of this area are very much aware about the world around due to their high literacy. People are more conscious of maintaining their public image. They do not like to be accused of wrong doing. This is also one of the reasons why the people here easily agree to pay taxes when informed to do so.

Since the staff including the secretary is not very far from this Gram Panchayat, they are familiar with the regular and non regular tax payers. Usually, the PDO or the secretary reminds the bill collector and all the staff to concentrate on the non regular tax payers from the month of December. In the month of February, they start asking the people to pay the tax, wherever they meet them. Sometimes they also ask people to pay the taxes in the bus or in the public places. Usually, in such places, people do not like other people to know that they have not paid the tax. Hence, they do not commit the mistake of not paying the taxes.

## **C. Other Innovative Interventions / Best Practices**

### **i. Vaccination Campaign for all the Dogs in the Villages**

The Panchayat received complaints that a few stray (mad) dogs bit the cattle and they died due to rabies. The PDO discussed this in the general meeting and suggested an idea of conducting a

camp for immunizing the dogs. The elected body liked the idea and took keen interest to conduct the camp. The GP contacted the health department to know about the vaccine to be bought to immunize the dogs and purchased vaccine from its own revenue. They took the help of the veterinary hospital to have the doctors with them for one week. The GP put up notices in all the public places and informed the date of immunization in their respective areas. They also advertised that they would immunize all the dogs, both pet and stray. The people also got excited by this and brought their pet dogs to the immunization camp. Three doctors in one week immunized around 1500 dogs. The GP, not only covered their area but also the border areas, since the dogs from the border areas too come to the panchayat area.

## ii. Resource Mobilization

The GP has undertaken many innovative steps to mobilize the resources through various ways.

**Using the Waste Pipes and Building an Auto Stand:** There was no fixed auto stand for the autos in the village. When the PWD department was changing the pipes, the GP requested them to provide the discarded pipes. These pipes were used for building an Auto stand in Madamakki village.



**Establishing a Traffic Circle:** Two roads join at a junction in Madamakki Village. Here, the GP wanted to establish a circle. But there was no special grant for this. They discussed this in the meeting and sent a proposal to Regional Manager of Vijaya Bank and requested for a donation

of Rs.50000. The GP promised to name the circle as Vijaya Bank Circle if the donation was sanctioned. The GP was able to use its influence, also because the manager was a relative of the GP staff. As a result, Vijaya Bank has taken the initiative of establishing a traffic circle, which is under construction at present.

**Resource Mobilization for the Community Hall:** Under the Suvarna Gramodhaya Scheme, a community hall was constructed which costed Rs.8.5 lakhs in the year 2009-10. Due to acute shortage of funds, the hall did not have basic facilities like seating arrangements and other facilities. Also, the community hall never got inaugurated due to the lack of basic facilities and

funds. The PDO and the members discussed this and sought the help of the local donors. As a result the community hall got furnished with hundred plastic moulded chairs, five ceiling fans, one podium, one public audio system and one clock. The complete expenditure for inaugurating the community hall was borne by the local donors.

**Involved Local People in Planning:** Under the Western Ghats Project, Rs.2.4 lakhs was allotted to construct a foot bridge at Samse, Shedimane village in the year 2010-11. As was the established practice, GP discussed about this project with the local people. The local people suggested that constructing a foot bridge, was of no use, instead a minor bridge could be of great help to commute. But the GP expressed its budget constraints, since the project had only a fixed amount. The local people agreed to pool in the rest of the money. As a result a minor bridge costing around Rs. 5.50 lakhs was constructed.

### **iii. Community Kitchen**

Indian Gas Agency, in view of its Golden Jubilee Celebrations, wanted to take up some development activities for the Koraga (ST) community in the taluk. They contacted the nearby GP, and met the secretary of Madamakki GP, who was in-charge of both the GPs. The secretary requested the agency to establish community kitchens in the two areas Hanja and Adigala Bettu, belonging to Madamakki GP where the Koraga community lives. The GP contributed Rs.5000, from its OSR and the rest of the cost was borne by the agency.

### **iv. Other practices**

Several camps and trainings have been organized by the GP with the collaboration of local organizations. Conducting of health camps are very common in this GP, where the DHO and the THO get involved in the health camp. The GP involves departments like horticulture, watershed, women and child welfare to conduct trainings for the women and the youth. The GP has conducted a three months tailoring class for a group women, where 11 women have got trained in the first batch of trainees.

The GP has conducted Cleanliness Campaign (Swatchata Andolana) campaign, where all the GP members, the PDO, the secretary, other GP staff and school teachers were involved in village cleaning and they created awareness among the people. A Koraga Colony (ST colony called Adigara Bettu) had lots of bushes. The Secretary by personally participating in clearing the bushes motivated the other people in the area to clear the bushes. This also shows the interest of the GP staff in creating awareness among the people.

In the schools, the GP conducts competitions like essay competition and plastics collection competition in order to create awareness for discouraging the use of plastic etc.

Giving donation for schools, development work or for any kind of camps is very common among the people of this area. It is not that they donate by themselves all the time, but the staff and the GP members also identify and motivate the donors to donate.

Shramadans have become the part of people's life in this area. There are frequent Shramadans conducted by various local groups with the GP's involvement.

Madamakki Grama Panchayat has 528 job card holders with the population of 867 workers. In the year 2010-11, the GP has released Rs.10.10 lakhs, for NREGA in accordance with the amount of work done. The GP found it difficult to implement the NREGA scheme effectively due to the high local labor rate. As per NREGA, the daily wage is Rs. 155, where as the local daily wage labour rate is Rs.250-Rs. 300 and some times more than Rs.300. Women get a daily wage labor of Rs.175-Rs. 200. In the local area, the people who work also get breakfast, lunch and coffee/tea with snacks in between.

One of the major works completed under the NREGA was the expansion of the school play ground in Arasamma Kanu area. This did not happen to fulfill the NREGA objectives of providing labor for the needy. But rather, it was the good will of the people to develop the school premises, since they had studied there before and now their children are studying there. The SDMC and other GP members motivated the people to come forward and work with a feeling that they are undertaking Shramadan for the sake of their own school.

## **6.0 Contributing Factors for the Implementation of Best Practices**

### **▪ The Innovative Ideas of the Panchayat Development Officer**

The post of Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) is a full time position in the Gram Panchayats created by the Department of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Government of Karnataka through the Karnataka Public Service Commission since 2010.

Mr. Rajesh Shenoy, the PDO belongs to Madamakki Taluk. He is a graduate and an ex-service man from the army, who retired as a Hawaldar. During his tenure in the defence, he worked in places such as Jammu and Kashmir, Jalandar, Arunachal Pradesh, Mumbai etc. He had immense experience in dealing with people in the terror affected areas, conducting many camps like Shramadan, medical camps, motivating people to support the army, etc. When he was working in the defence, he also developed proficiency in the use of computers. In short, he had worked

very hard for 15 years in the army and had trained himself with the required discipline and commitment to work for the country.

When he retired, he saw the call for the PDO positions in Karnataka and he decided to apply. He got selected for the post with the help of the ex-service man quota. After his selection, he underwent two months of induction training on PRI, its functions and his role as a PDO. He joined Madamakki Panchayat in May 2010.

Madamakki Panchayat is considered as a naxalite affected area. Situated in a corner of the block covered with dense forests, the PDO did not find this different from his past experience of dealing with the various affected groups. Also ailing from the same belt, it was much easy for him to build the rapport with the people. Having the experience of working closely with the people, Mr. Rajesh Shenoy was able to win the minds of Madamakki GP people. He identified the issues by referring to the GP documents, talking to the people and visiting the area. Since, the newly elected body also got formed during the same time of his appointment (June 2010), it was easy for him to get well acquainted with the new members, where he could orient them well on the Act and the provisions in the Act. He brought the identified issues to the notice of the elected body members and motivated them to take actions. He also gave several innovative ideas like providing individual water connections, inaugurating and providing facilities to the community hall through local contribution, enabling the people to take responsibility of taking care of the streetlights by motivating them to donate streetlights, immunization campaign for dogs etc.

As per the information provided by the secretary and the GP members, PDO is not only a well informed but is full of new ideas. He also explains all the circulars and the rules in the Act. When there was a position of only a secretary and he used to be in charge of two GPs, he could not monitor the progress qualitatively. By creating the position of PDO, it has smoothened the functions of GP and also has enabled in bringing about accountability and transparency.

#### ▪ **Experience of Elected Members**

Uday Kumar Shetty is a supporter of one of the political parties in the district. He has studied till 7<sup>th</sup> standard and works as a labour contractor. He has nearly 20 years of experience as an elected representative in the Gram Panchayat. In the year 1993-94, when the first grama panchayat election was held, a teacher from his area motivated him to contest the election and he won. As he started getting more exposure to the functions of the GP, it motivated him further and he continues to contest in the elections even to this date. He has undergone more than 36 trainings. In his nearly 20 years of tenure, he was absent in only 2 panchayat meetings reflecting his commitment to work for the people. He has a very strong rapport with various departments at the

taluk and district levels. He has also good support from the MLA, MLC and the local leaders. Hence, he was able to exert his influence and access various projects to his GP area.

The elected body members get along with each other very well, in spite of having their own political affiliations. They respect the new ideas and initiatives of the PDO and also buy in experiences of senior elected members and sometimes that of the ex-elected members. Also, all the women GP members too have attended one or the other trainings.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

The Madamakki Grama Panchayat is proud of bagging the PEAIS award. Though the cultural and geographical set up is very different and conducive, when compared to other GPs in the district, there are many best practices, which can be emulated by other GPs. The strong team work of the staff and the GP members can be a lesson for the future body of elected representatives, as well as for other local governments. The role of PDO, for bringing in innovative ideas to the GP and the respect shown to such ideas by the elected representatives, is a really contributing factor to the development of the GP and in fact such pro active processes can enable the effective development of other GPs too. It is not just about implementing new ideas, but the ability to think about and implement sustainability measures and in the process, enabling the people to be accountable to development is one of the major concerns and challenges of any GP. This GP has exhibited considerable success in this aspect and especially has succeeded in creating an enabling environment by involving the people in planning, decision making, implementation through local resource mobilization and involving them in several activities of the GP.

If all GP members and its staff believe in such a self evolved strength and walk the path, the potential for sustainable community driven development, would increase greatly. Thus the goal of bottom-up approach to development can be achieved to a great extent.

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## Key People Interviewed

Name S/Sri	Designation
Rajesh Shenoy	Panchayat Development Officer
Baskar Shetty	Secretary
Ashok Kumar Shetty	Clerk
Gopal	Bill Collector
Smt. Pavitra	Data Entry Operator
Smt. Vani	Librarian
Prakash Shetty	GP Member
Uday Kumar Shetty	GP Member
Smt. Rathi Shedthi	GP member
Dayanand	GP Member
Smt. Susheela	GP Member
Smt. Paddu	GP Member
Ashok Kumar Hegade	Villager
Chandrashekar Shetty	President of the local temple
Mahesh	Animator,
Sitaram	Animator,
Praveen Kumar	Ex president of Navashakthi Youth Group
Madan Kumar	Ex president/member of the GP
Smt. Gulabi	Beneficiary of water connection
Smt. Ramya	Beneficiary of water connection
Asha	Secretary, milk society
Shekar Shetty	President, Arasamma Kanu milk society
Heria Koraga	Daily labourer Beneficiary of public tap & public toilet in the ST colony
Smt. Sura	
Smt. Rathna	
Smt. Jyothi	
Smt. Suguna	Daily labourer
Srinivas	Beneficiary of individual water connection
SDMC members	SDMC
Women from Kabbinala Village	Daily laborers in the cashew factory
Women from Shedimane Village	Housewives, daily labourers, teachers who are the beneficiaries of GP

More than 76 people were interviewed through individual interview and Focus group discussion