

Role of Rural Energy & Ecological Volunteers Corps (REEVOCs) in RE promotion India

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The village level volunteers group, called as REEVOCs (Rural Energy and Ecological Volunteers Corps) has played an important role in the implementation and management of renewable energy (RE) programmes in 12 Eco-villages. These villages are being jointly promoted and developed by WAFD and INSEDA under the “eco village development projects”, since April 2002.

The last 4 ½ years of experiences in the “eco village development project” has shown that unless a community has ownership of a programme and is involved at all levels from planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating, long term sustainability is not possible. The EVD project being implemented in 12 villages of Sewar Block in Bharatpur District of Rajasthan state, has successfully demonstrated this.

The steps followed in this process are summarized below:

- A group of 4 volunteers were selected from each village, 2 men 2 women making a total of 48 volunteer group, called as REEVOCs;
- For 2 years this group (entire 48 volunteers) met at least once a month and learnt about the importance of eco village development and it's relevance in today's world, and the important role that renewable energy plays in this; and
- It is important to target each important group in the village, to achieve this, these volunteers helped promote and organize, in their villages, women's groups and youth groups, and carried out implementation and demonstration of among other things renewable energy units.

After four years of implementation these volunteers (REEVOCs) have understood the importance of eco village development, and the role of renewable energy such as biogas plants, plantation of energy crops like Jatropha, and solar energy. In addition they have also become aware about the production of SVO (straight vegetable oil) and bio diesel from non-edible oil seed like Jatropha seeds for operation of diesel pumping sets, as well as decentralize power generation at the rural household and village levels, by using bio-diesel operated generating sets. They are now motivated to undertake Jatropha cultivation on the boundaries and their other wise unproductive waste lands.



Now for more systematic and organized implementation of RE and other related activities in an integrated manner for desired output/results in a foreseeable future, the 48 REEVOCs have formed a “management committee”.

This “management committee” has been elected by the volunteers themselves which has one representative from each of the 12 project villages. The management committee in turn has elected 6 office bearers- out of them three are the key office bearers, i.e., President, Secretary and Treasurer, to oversee the day to day operation aspects of the programmes in these 12 eco-villages. The other office bearers are, Vice president, Joint Secretary and Joint Treasurer. The office bearers take more responsibilities on behalf of the management committee and meet more frequently during the inter-sessions of the management committee meetings and are delegated to meet the district level government functionaries to present the problems of the group as well as find out appropriate government programmes to implement in these 12 villages.

The role of this management committee is to sit with WAFD and take an active part in planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the programmes, which will have focus on community-centered poverty reduction, by integrating REs in all the socio-economic developmental programmes. Field level monitoring and decision-making is done much more effectively by the committee. Solutions to problems are found by the committee jointly, which are cost effective as well as much more realistic and field oriented.

Role of WAFD is that of a facilitator and to for providing guidance where needed, as well as to arrange for funds, training, RE, demonstration and mobilize appropriate technical support.

To further ensure people’s active participation, self help groups or user groups and micro-credit groups are being promoted for different activities, such as user group for bio gas plant owners, user group for kitchen gardens etc. These user groups will further help the managing committee in monitoring, evaluation and promotion of their specific programs/activities.



To sum up, village level management of programmes through people’s own committees and organizations will ensure sustainability and continuity of the programme.

Over time a knowledge bank will be created within the people themselves, and they can take care of most of their problems. External dependence will be reduced in terms of dissemination of new findings and information etc, from time to time.

With experience the group will be able to independently access certain funds from government and other sources as well.