

Field Visit Brief

Innovation in Urban Water Services in Indian Cities



Sarvajal Water ATMs

Since October 2013, Piramal Sarvajal, in partnership with Delhi Jal Board, has successfully implemented an innovative project to provide clean, affordable water to inhabitants of the Savda Ghevra resettlement slum colony in New Delhi. The solution consists of a decentralized 'hub-and-spokes' model comprising one remote-monitored purification unit and 15 automated distributive 'water-ATMs' that ensure residents have easy access to clean water 24x7.

Though Delhi Jal Board does send free water tankers to the colony, it was found out through a baseline survey that most inhabitants do not have direct access to this resource due to the erratic frequency of delivery, rent-seeking behaviour, and aggressive competition over the limited quantity of water provided thus. A restricted volume of clean water, coupled with the crippling unpredictability of its arrival has proved to be damaging to residents of Savda Ghevra colony – through both a health as well as economic perspective.

In response, Sarvajal's solution utilizes a cloud-based distribution system that is monitored in real time. All transactions at the Water ATM device are handled via a cashless mechanism through RFID cards – ensuring constant access at affordable prices as low as INR 0.15 per litre. Because all machines are monitored electronically, residents can rest assured that their solar powered ATMs will never be empty, that regularly tested clean water will be delivered on time, and that the purification 'hub' plant can be trusted thanks to Piramal Sarvajal's Soochak technology that enables preventive maintenance, quality control and remote diagnoses.

The ATM machines are currently supplying over 50,000 litres of pure, affordable water to the urban poor residents of Savda Ghevra every month, a large number of whom are also getting 20 litre bubble-tops (water jars) delivered to their homes. This is all despite the continued provision of DJB's free water, which says something about the quality of Sarvajal water as well.

As is substantiated by actual data, Sarvajal's solution has proved to be an affordable, in-demand, convenient, sustainable, and most importantly – measurable, solution to a pressing problem.



CURE India and FEMS3 joint intervention for developing water treatment plant for Low Income Group people in Agra

Kiosks based Decentralized Water Treatment Systems

In Delhi, the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE) India has set up local water treatment plants with kiosks as business enterprises. Managed by an entrepreneur, the treatment plants provide doorstep supply at affordable rates in water-shadow areas. While the plants themselves are generating incomes, by making water safe, these have led to better health and productivity. CURE India has plans to also pipe this water to homes, depending upon community willingness. CURE India has also helped families build household toilets connected to individual or cluster septic tanks. The Cluster Septic Tank in Savda Ghevra, Delhi is helping 320 families to have their own toilets. By linking toilets to Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems (DEWATs), CURE India has helped generate water for recycling – housing construction, peri-urban agriculture and household use. More DEWATs on city's other drains are planned to clean up the storm water drainage system and reduce pollution in River Yamuna.

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