

**Hon. Laxmanrao Dhoble,
Minister, Water Supply and Sanitation Department, Maharashtra
(India)**

Speech Excerpts

INDIA BUSINESS FORUM

Rapid increase in global population and changes in climate have led to a serious water scarcity. Urban areas where population living is growing, are facing this severe issue. My state is not the exception for the same.

It goes without saying that the quantum of potable water available for all of us is too less and its improvement is also beyond human reach. Therefore, efficient management of water supply has turned into core interest of water organizations to develop renewed water policies. According to this, network owners will need to evaluate the condition of the water distribution network, assess past data of leakages/ breakages and risk of failure, visualize areas of high risk, propose “repair or replace” strategies and prioritize the works thereon. In tune with this need of an hour, we have considered drinking water supply as a prominent agenda of the Welfare State. Maharashtra, in its golden anniversary year, is implementing comprehensive programme, namely Maharashtra Sujal Nirmal Abhiyan (MSNA), in the sector of Water Supply and Sanitation. We are also intending to utilize advanced and innovative technologies in water supply management.

One of the major challenges is the high level of “non-revenue water” (NRW). The NRW seriously affects the financial balance of the organization thereby reducing its capacity to fund necessary expansion of service, especially for the poor. A high NRW level normally indicates a poorly run water system due to lack of the governance, autonomy, accountability and the technical and managerial skills.

Most of the urban water supply schemes in Maharashtra are managed by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). However, the above said deficiencies are always a part of this management. Therefore, any further new scheme may be of source development, additional network, supplementary scheme etc., is being sanctioned by the State so as to make compulsory for the ULBs to implement reforms to cater the lacunae. The reforms cover the ‘Change in attitude of personnels, leak detection and repairs, water/energy audit, computerization of water billing system and consumer redressal system, water quality management and many other aspects. The technical arm of the state, i.e., Maharashtra Jeevan Pradhikaran (MJP) is leading in doing all whole hearted efforts in utilization of advanced innovative technologies for implementing reforms in its own water works. The reforms are aimed to achieve the status of 24x7 continuous water supply system. MJP has entered into Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) with PUB, Singapore to seek technical knowledge in advanced management which is being exercised in Ambarnath and Amravati water supply management. MJP has

developed a new perspective methodology in transformation of existing intermittent water supply system into 24x7 continuous water supply system. The ULB's will be replicating the same with the support of the State and MJP. We visualize increased service level of water system in near future after implementation of reforms.

However, we do realize that the people should feel the improved service level hereinafter continuously, and therefore, it is necessary to implement reform projects within time frame and without financial crunch. Furthermore, in order to increase service delivery level of water utilities, the state is preparing a business plan for water sector and intend to consult World Bank for assistance. The O & M activities are also very important to maintain the service level. Therefore, we are open to opt for PPT, BOT, BOOT Proposals, eg., Latur water supply management. MJP, the technical limb of the state is also being re-organized to accommodate the needed necessities of the new era.

....000....