

AAP govt begins pilot project to provide 24X7 drinking water 'straight from the tap'

A Mariyam Alavi

aruveetil.alavi@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government inaugurated the pilot project to their ambitious plan of providing 24x7 potable water to Delhi residents, at Navjivan Vihar on Sunday.

However, the project is to be handled by the same company that had failed to implement the supply improvement programme in Malviya Nagar earlier.

The new project in Navjivan Vihar is part of the larger project in the Malviya Nagar area, where the Delhi Jal Board had proposed their ambitious "Water Service Improvement Scheme", a private-public partnership with a consortium of French company Suez and infrastructure company SPML Infra Ltd, in 2012.

Quality potable water, which residents would be able to drink straight out of the tap and would require no additional filtering or decontamination, was described by deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia as a "dream" that was being fulfilled while inaugurating the project.

Kapil Mishra, the water minister of Delhi who was also present at the event, said that soon all Delhiites would be able to drink water straight from their taps, as the ministers did on Sunday in Navjivan Vihar.

"Entire Delhi has been divided into 1,010 units (where water supply networks can be isolated and fixed). All these areas will soon get 24x7 supply of direct from tap drinking water," said Mishra.

"Navjivan Vihar was not



Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia inaugurates the first 24x7 drinking water pilot project on Sunday. RAVI CHOUDHARY/HT PHOTO

'chosen' per se for the pilot. It is part of the Malviya Nagar project area. It is always complicated to change an intermittent water supply system to a 24/7 network, especially because the water supply network was not scientifically laid," said Keshav Chandra, CEO of the Delhi Jal Board.

The affluent region in South Delhi was ideal because of multiple reasons according to Chandra, such as the network here could be isolated easily allowing easy calculations of the total water supplied to and consumed in the area, and it was easier to convince the educated residents to bypass their Underground Reservoir (UGR) to avoid secondary contamination.

The isolated pipelines also helped fix any leakages, and

Chandra praised Suez India, a subsidiary of the French company Suez Environnement, for their advanced technology which helped detect these. "Suez has helium gas detection for detecting leaks. This is high-end technology. Otherwise acoustic detection is used," he said.

This company had come under scrutiny, after reports surfaced alleging that Malviya Nagar was facing acute water shortage even two years after the implementation of the supply improvement scheme.

Mishra, however, said that though this is the same company as the one which was part of the initial PPP, this time greater involvement of the DJB would ensure better implementation.

▶ The entire national capital has been divided into 1,010 units (where water supply networks can be isolated and fixed). All these areas will soon get 24x7 supply of direct from tap drinking water.

KAPIL MISHRA, Delhi water minister

