

# CONSTRUCTIONWEEKONLINE

## SPML Infra to play key role in developing water infrastructure in India

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SPML Infra will play a key role in the development of sustainable water infrastructure to realise the vision of “Nal Se Jal”. This ambitious scheme announced by the Finance Minister during her maiden budget presentation aims to provide piped water connection to every household in India by 2024. Given the massive number of connecting about 140 million remaining rural and urban households in five years’ time will be a challenging task.

The water resources in India are under tremendous pressure as availability of safe drinking water is not sufficient to cater the population demand. The rate of groundwater withdrawal is extremely high as compared to available supplies. The effect of expanding cities will see the demand for fresh water supply rising exponentially and with

limited resources; India may become a water starved nation. Over-exploitation of groundwater, failure to recharge aquifers, reduction in catchment capacities due to uncontrolled urbanisation and no reuse facility for treated wastewater are all causes for the precarious tilt in the water balance. If the present rate of groundwater depletion persists, India will have only 22% of the present daily per capita water available by 2050, possibly forcing the country to import water. The other prominent challenge being faced by water sector is the ageing infrastructure of distribution system. Water utilities in India are faced with the crucial need to address these challenges and revamping of infrastructure on priority for the economic, social, and environmental implications.

The government has placed a well thought plan of providing drinking water facility to every household of the country that will help to cater the urgent need to develop adequate water infrastructure. The “nal se jal” scheme will lead to a huge investment in water infrastructure development in the country that will help in addressing the issues of drinking water supply.

SPML Infra started managing water at the time when nobody was talking about it as it was not a business proposition. With sheer commitment and dedication, the company continued to develop water infrastructure in different states. In a rich legacy of about four decades, it has completed over 600 projects of infrastructure development out of which more than 500 projects were exclusively in water supply segment. Presently, the company is providing drinking water facilities to over 50 million people of the country through its various executed projects. With over 25 water supply projects under various stages of execution, SPML Infra features among the world’s top 50 private water companies as per Global Water Intelligence report. From a small water supply projects it first executed in Mizoram, SPML Infra is currently engaged in Phase III of the Saurashtra-Narmada Avtaran Irrigation Project (SAUNI Yojana), a very large and ambitious water supply project in Gujarat which envisages providing drinking water facilities to 39 million people across 132 towns and 11,456 villages along with water for irrigation to 1.8 million hectare land, easing the water scarcity concerns in the region. The 24X7 urban water supply projects in Delhi, Pune and 6 cities in Karnataka are helping about 5 million people with clean drinking water facilities.

Non-Revenue Water (NRW) is a universal problem faced across the globe as these losses are real and detrimental to the financial capability of water utilities. In the quest for saving precious water, SPML Infra helped in significantly reducing non-revenue water in Bengaluru by using innovative technology for leak detection in hidden pipes. The experience has been rewarding as the company ensured the NRW reduction from 61% to 27% thus saving of over 40 million litres of drinking water per day. In many Indian cities, the average NRW is as high as 50% of the total water production which reduces the revenue and efficiency of water supply services. In an increasingly complex water situation, the water utilities in India needs to focus on ways of more efficient water management for maintaining water supply systems. Utilities which carefully and creatively use their water assets for strategic urban advantage will ultimately be more sustainable and competitive.

Subhash Sethi, chairman, SPML Infra, said, “With ever reducing water sources and increasing demand complexities, it is essential that we rework on our priorities towards drinking water supply and resource

development. The newly formed Jal Shakti Ministry is on the mission to provide clean drinking water to every household in the country and has been allocated good budget to ensure piped water supply under the Jal Jeevan Mission. The number of water projects executed by us confirms the added-value solutions and expertise that we provide to our water utility and municipal clients. The company's competence, sectorial knowledge and pan India experience increases its ability to deliver several water infrastructure projects simultaneously. Our expertise in laying over 10,000km of water pipeline, construction and erection of high value pumping stations along with large number of urban and rural water supply projects will help us in executing water supply projects with precision and speed required to complete the mammoth task of connecting all households with piped water supply in next five years."