#WorldCitiesDay, 31 Oct: Water & World Communities

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SPML Infra Limited   Urban October   World Cities Day

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The world is changing at an unprecedented pace with faster urbanization, industrialization, and technological innovation. There is an on-going trend of migration from rural settlements to cities as it has become the engine of economic growth and provides the atmosphere for businesses to thrive and its residents to make a good living. The population growth of cities across the globe is much higher than their rural clusters and it poses a difficult challenge to authorities in providing essential amenities and services to city dwellers.

The authorities' are having the most important responsibilities of the city to maintain and improve its infrastructure, addressing critical gaps in systems and expanding equitable access to public services which is crucial to resident safety and public health. From providing water, sewer, and waste management services to maintaining roads, healthcare services, and other infrastructure maintenance and public works services to keep cities running smoothly and efficiently are important responsibilities.

India is experiencing the worst water crisis in its history with more than 20 big cities are facing acute water shortages. An estimate suggests that more than 600 million people in the country are facing a severe water crisis and this number is set to grow further as water sources are declining at an astonishing rate. The city authorities are under tremendous pressure to provide reliable and low-cost water and wastewater services while also meeting stringent standards to keep the public healthy and the environment safe. The water shortages in cities across the country require immediate action on the development of resources, reduction of demand, and

higher efficiency in treatment and transmission along with a high level of wastewater reuse and zero liquid discharge from the industries.

The United Nations in its report has estimated that by the year 2030, India is expected to have more than 60 cities with over one million and six megacities with over 10 million populations. This rapid urbanization and migration of population to cities will have a considerable burden on its overall infrastructure.

Access to clean drinking water facility is essential for modern cities as it has a direct impact on their sustainability. It is important to ensure that there is sufficient water available and accessible for the people considering that the majority of the country is under tremendous water stress. The municipal authorities across the country need to adopt sustainable water processes by leveraging knowledge sharing and smart solutions.

Information and communication technology have revolutionized the world in recent years and in fact matured with mass production allowing wider uptake of modern devices and solutions but the current situation in the water domain is characterized by a low level of maturity concerning standardization of ICT solutions and business processes. Smart technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, Smart Irrigation, Smart Monitoring, and Wastewater Recycling can be leveraged successfully to bridge gaps in existing water and wastewater infrastructure in India.

New innovations in water technology are helpful to deal with declining resources and transforming the water distribution system. The digitally connected pipeline networks, water & wastewater treatment plants with modern filtration systems, innovative leak detection, desalination, and other digital intervention in water management can have a positive impact on the current water scenario. Intelligent water management solutions will help to analyze water demand for different areas in a city and allocate resources accordingly.

The integrated approach towards sustainable water and wastewater management is need of the time that is required for better coordination and management of water resources and to create an effective ecosystem that drives stakeholder engagement and encourages water infrastructure to remain economically productive. A strategic and pragmatic approach based on current and emerging challenges, analysis of available and possible solutions needs to be implemented to make water available for people and businesses in the time to come.

About the Author
*Armed with business education and a firm belief in his potential to inspire change, **Subhash Sethi** has transformed the nation's approach to water infrastructure solutions for the public good. Under his leadership, SPML Infra Limited has established itself as the leader in the water domain and developed sustainable infrastructure helping water utilities to deliver safe and clean drinking water to millions of Indian citizens.*

***SPML Infra Limited**, the leading water management company has contributed immensely towards providing clean drinking water to more than 50 million urban and rural populations in India. In a legacy of over four decades, the company has executed more than 600 projects thus creating value assets for drinking water facilities, wastewater treatment, integrated sewerage networks, better municipal waste management, power transmission & distribution, and rural electrification. SPML Infra is the first Indian company featured among the World's Top 50 Private Water Companies as per the research conducted by Global Water Intelligence, London. SPML Infra also features among India's Top 500 Largest Corporations as per the Fortune India research report.*

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