

Piramal solution was
not an easy task.
sarvajal



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BUSTER**

Piramal Sarvajal, seeded by Piramal Foundation in 2008, is a mission driven social venture which plans and deploys innovative solutions for creating affordable access of safe drinking water in underserved regions. "Sarvajal" in Sanskrit means water for all. Sarvajal is at the cutting edge of creating technologies and business practices in safe drinking water sector that are intended to make a simple market-based model which is feasible in both rural and urban conditions. The mission is to innovate, demonstrate, enable and promote affordable and safe drinking water solutions. Piramal Sarvajal, which was started by Anand Shah, sets up community level arrangements that are operated locally but are centrally managed by market-based pay per use system. They work across 16 states in India- Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Telangana and Odisha.

How it all began and the technology used: 97 million people living in India lack access to safe drinking water and are at the risk of contracting water-borne diseases. Developing a workable solution was not an easy task.

Sarvajal faced various difficulties. Although there was water purification technologies available but the company wanted a financially viable and sustainable business model. Sarvajal started with door-to-door delivery of RO water. This technique was not successful as people used to allot different delivery times which increased the manual labor.

Another problem with this was delayed payments. To solve these two problems, they came up with the idea of water ATMs and prepaid cards. V1 had a water tank locked above the machine.

The water tank was connected to the RO plant, which used groundwater. This plant processed 1000 liters in an hour. V1 had three buttons: 1, 5 and 10 liters.

People would scan their cards and get the required amount of water. The problem with V1 was that water was wasted because standard sizes of containers were unavailable. If the customer pressed 5 liters button, and the container was 4.5 liters, 0.5 liters would go waste. There was a social problem as well. One big village in Rajasthan has two to three smaller villages called Dhani. If one water ATM was installed in one Dhani, the others would object.

The advanced model of water ATM took care of these two problems. The new model is strategically placed so that it is easily accessible and is made simpler by providing just one button. Sarvajal's water ATM is a low cost, solar-powered, self-contained water vending machine that stores clean water and can be refilled by the nearest franchisee. The company now has 154 franchisees and now delivers clean water to 100000 people. The operations of water ATMs are managed through local partners.

This promotes local entrepreneurship. Sarvajal, for-profit social enterprise aims that people should drink clean and safe drinking water than spending their income on medical treatments.