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‘UK can offer sustainable model for water supply’

Our Bureau

Chennai, Feb. 16 The Indian public sector water utilities need to move towards private sector participation to ensure quality in water supply and sewage disposal service, according to the British Water Mission to India, a delegation looking at partnerships with Indian companies in water-related infrastructure.

Water management companies in the UK have over two decades of experience in handling water utilities that have been in private hands. Even if not privatising, public sector utilities need to move towards a sustainable system that would involve levying viable tariffs and heavy capital investments to ensure quality supply and to cope with growing demand for water and sewage disposal, the members said.

Addressing a seminar on India and UK developing water sector partnership, Mr Peter Jarema, Director, Farrer Consulting Ltd, a member of the water mission, said issues in the Indian water sector involved intermittent supply, leakage, inefficient zoning, lack of

metering, unviable tariffs that barely cover operation and maintenance, and poor service to the consumer. Absence of capital investments to improve service only leads to deterioration and further drop in quality.

UK water companies have been involved in water utility services ever since privatisation happened over two decades ago.