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Interview with Dr D. Suresh

"Private agencies have to work in collaboration with ULBs to improve infrastructure"

To improve the overall management of water supply systems, there is a need to incentivise private agencies to take up projects on a public-private partnership (PPP) basis. Moreover, technologies need to be adopted to develop alternative supply sources that can help meet the growing demand for water. Dr D. Suresh, municipal commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF), discusses the state of water supply and sewerage in the city as well as the corporation's IT initiatives and future plans. Excerpts...

What is the current level of water supply in the city? What are the different sources of water supply?

According to the Census 2011, there are around 1.45 million people in Faridabad. At present, the city's water demand is estimated at 250 million litres per day (mld), 160 mld of which is provided by the MCF. The main source of water for the city is groundwater drawn from tube wells, which is supplied for two to three hours a day. The groundwater is not treated by the municipal corporation. Instead, the residents have adopted various measures such as reverse osmosis systems to treat water at the domestic level.

The decadal growth rate of population in Faridabad is over 30 per cent. Although initiatives are being taken to improve civic services, infrastructure development has not been able to keep pace with the population growth. However, efforts are being made to improve the water supply system in the city.

What is the current demand-supply gap in the city? What are some of the measures being taken to bridge this gap?

The current water demand-supply gap is estimated at 90 mld. This gap (in terms of availability) is expected to be met through a water supply augmentation scheme being implemented under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). The project will supply about 400 mld of potable water, which is sufficient to meet the requirements of the city till 2030. The scope of work for the Rs 5 billion project involves storage capacity augmentation, construction of rainy wells for drawing water from the Yamuna river, etc. So far, about 60 per cent of the work has been accomplished and the project is scheduled for completion by December 2013. However, a major concern is the deficit in the water distribution network, estimated at 30 per cent, which requires an investment of Rs 2-Rs 3 billion to be overcome. The MCF is planning to implement a project under JNNURM Phase II to this end. Other measures to bridge the demand-supply gap include adopting technologies to develop alternative water supply sources such as treated wastewater for non-potable purposes.

What is the current proportion of non-revenue water (NRW) in the city's total water supply? What are some of the steps being implemented to reduce NRW, particularly leakages and water theft?

The current level of NRW in the total water supply is estimated at 52.7 per cent. This is primarily due to a large number of unmetered connections and high proportion of leakages. Moreover, unauthorised connections in the city are estimated at 100,000, which accounts for 20-25 per cent of NRW. The MCF is conducting a number of drives and camps to regularise water connections; however, it is progressing at a slow pace.

In order to reduce NRW, there is a need to incentivise the private sector for taking up projects on a PPP basis for overall management of the water supply system. Further, the process of regularising unauthorised water supply and sewerage connections must be simplified. In addition, steps must be taken to revise the existing tariff structure.

At present, domestic consumers are charged Rs 1.25-Rs 4 per kilolitre, which is quite low in comparison to cities such as Delhi. There is an urgent need for a sustainable tariff struc-



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"The decadal population growth rate is over 30 per cent. Infrastructure development has not been able to keep pace. However, efforts are being made to improve the water supply system in Faridabad."

ture to incentivise private agencies to work in collaboration with the urban local bodies.

What is the status of wastewater generation and wastewater treatment capacity in the city? What role can treated wastewater play in meeting the growing water requirements?

At present, the city generates about 130 mld of sewage. The current sewage treatment capacity in the city is estimated at 160 mld, of which the capacity utilisation stands at 50-60 per cent. Some of the technologies used for treating wastewater include the upflow aerobic sludge blanket and cyclic/sequence batch reactor. In terms of coverage, the city's sewerage network has a deficit of 35 per cent.

Treated wastewater can play a vital role in meeting the growing water requirements in Faridabad. Measures have to be taken to treat sewage water and canal water for use for non-potable purposes. Currently, initiatives are being undertaken by the MCF to recycle a small portion of sewage water and sell it for non-potable purposes.

What measures have been taken by the corporation to redress consumer complaints and streamline bill payment services?

The MCF has introduced an online complaint redressal system for receiving consumer complaints related to water supply, drainage, waterlogging, etc. Besides this, there are two other options for consumers to register their complaints – at the complaint centre or through telephonic registration. However, consumer feedback for the online redressal system has not been satisfactory as the system managed to cover only a very small percentage of the population. Moreover, it received more complaints than it was equipped to handle.

The civic agency is planning to upgrade the existing grievance redressal system by setting up dedicated citizen facilitation centres. Currently, there are 35 wards in the city and the MCF plans to set up a facilitation centre in each ward. So far, seven facilitation centres have been set up. Consumers can register complaints related to any municipal service being provided by the corporation. A management information system (MIS) will be set up to update information on the type of complaint, redressal mechanism, current status of complaints, time taken to redress complaints, reason for delay, etc. Also, consumers can pay their bills or taxes at the facilitation centres through kiosks. These kiosks, in collaboration with various banks, will enable consumers to pay their bills through credit and debit card facilities.

Recently, the MCF hired a private agency to collect taxes from consumers. The meter reading staff engaged by the private agency will be equipped with automatic meter reading machines capable of issuing bills and collecting payments on the spot. The machines will be linked to the MIS to update and maintain payment details online.

What is the status of the e-governance programme in the city?

"Resource mobilisation mechanisms have to be planned in collaboration with the state government to attract investments in infrastructure-deficit areas."

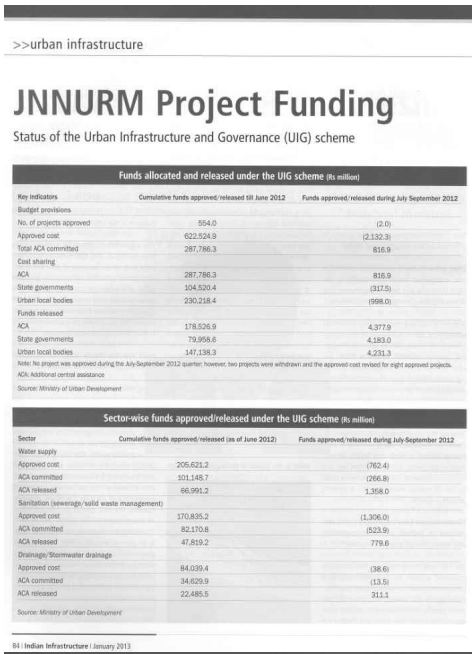
The e-governance system is currently under implementation. The MCF plans to bring services such as the issuance of birth and death certificates; collection of property tax, and water and sewerage taxes as well as the issuance of payment receipts and building plan approvals under the ambit of the e-governance system. The system will also allow consumers to track the status of these services.

What are the future plans for improving infrastructure services in Faridabad?

Going forward, major investments are required to bridge the infrastructure deficit in the city. The key areas of infrastructure deficit include the water distribution network (deficit of 30 per cent), stormwater drainage (500 km) and sewerage network (35 per cent).

According to the City Development Plan (2006), about Rs 31 billion will be required over a period of 10 years to bridge this deficit. This translates into an annual investment requirement of Rs 3-Rs 3.5 billion. However, currently, the MCF spends Rs 2-Rs 2.5 billion on infrastructure development.

Resource mobilisation mechanisms have to be planned in collaboration with the state government to attract investments in infrastructure-deficit areas. These mechanisms could include monetising land assets, improving collection methods and raising loans from financial agencies such as Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited and the National Capital Region Planning Board. ▶



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JNNURM Project Funding

Status of the Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG) scheme

Funds allocated and released under the UIG scheme (Rs million)

Key indicators	Cumulative funds approved/released till June 2012	Funds approved/released during July September 2012
Budget provisions		
No. of projects approved	554.0	(2.0)
Approved cost	622,524.9	(2,132.3)
Total ACA committed	287,786.3	816.9
Cost sharing		
ACA	287,786.3	816.9
State governments	104,520.4	(317.5)
Urban local bodies	230,218.4	(998.0)
Funds released		
ACA	178,526.9	4,377.9
State governments	79,958.6	4,183.0
Urban local bodies	147,138.3	4,231.3

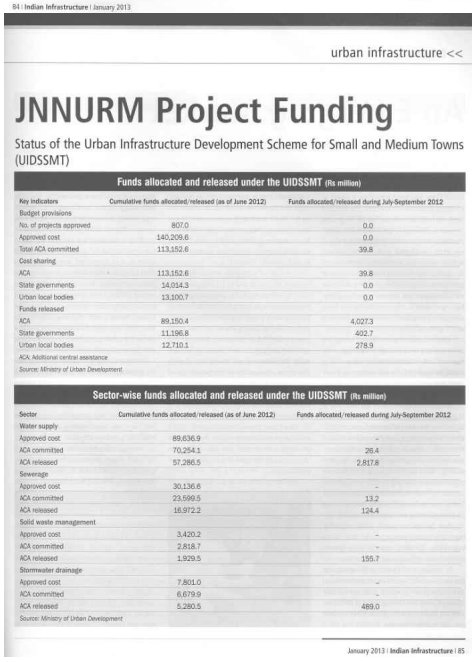
Note: No project was approved during the July-September 2012 quarter; however, two projects were withdrawn and the approved cost revised for eight approved projects.
ACA: Additional central assistance
Source: Ministry of Urban Development

Sector-wise funds approved/released under the UIG scheme (Rs million)

Sector	Cumulative funds approved/released (as of June 2012)	Funds approved/released during July-September 2012
Water supply		
Approved cost	205,621.2	(762.4)
ACA committed	101,148.7	(266.8)
ACA released	66,991.2	1,358.0
Sanitation (sewerage/solid waste management)		
Approved cost	170,835.2	(1,306.0)
ACA committed	82,170.8	(523.9)
ACA released	47,819.2	779.6
Drainage/Stormwater drainage		
Approved cost	84,039.4	(38.6)
ACA committed	34,629.9	(13.5)
ACA released	22,485.5	311.1

Source: Ministry of Urban Development

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JNNURM Project Funding

Status of the Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT)

Funds allocated and released under the UIDSSMT (Rs million)

Key indicators	Cumulative funds allocated/released (as of June 2012)	Funds allocated/released during July-September 2012
Budget provisions		
No. of projects approved	807.0	0.0
Approved cost	140,209.6	0.0
Total ACA committed	113,152.6	39.8
Cost sharing		
ACA	113,152.6	39.8
State governments	14,014.3	0.0
Urban local bodies	13,100.7	0.0
Funds released		
ACA	89,150.4	4,027.3
State governments	11,196.8	402.7
Urban local bodies	12,710.1	278.9

ACA: Additional central assistance
Source: Ministry of Urban Development

Sector-wise funds allocated and released under the UIDSSMT (Rs million)

Sector	Cumulative funds allocated/released (as of June 2012)	Funds allocated/released during July-September 2012
Water supply		
Approved cost	89,636.9	-
ACA committed	70,254.1	26.4
ACA released	57,286.5	2,817.8
Sewerage		
Approved cost	30,136.6	-
ACA committed	23,599.5	13.2
ACA released	16,972.2	124.4
Solid waste management		
Approved cost	3,420.2	-
ACA committed	2,818.7	-
ACA released	1,929.5	155.7
Stormwater drainage		
Approved cost	7,801.0	-
ACA committed	6,679.9	-
ACA released	5,280.5	489.0

Source: Ministry of Urban Development

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