

[ WATER WORLD ]

# GREY MATTER

It is said the third world war will be fought over water. All the more reason for companies like Jaldhara to come to the fore

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India, one of the fastest growing populations in the world, is facing a problem of perennial water shortage. According to a study by the Bombay Community Public Trust, the average water requirement for a person living in Mumbai is 135 litres per day. In comparison, an entire household living in the slums in Mumbai has to make do with just 25 litres of water per day. The relatively affluent in livable areas in the city don't do a lot better either.

This huge gap can be attributed to the fact that millions of people migrate to the cities in search of jobs.

Erratic monsoon patterns in the country worsen the migration problem. It is no surprise then that fresh water sources in every Indian city are fast depleting.

The question is—How long can a city like Mumbai sustain such an acute shortage of water?

One of the solutions to this problem lies in recycling waste water (also known as grey water) after treatment for non potable purposes. With its range of 'plug n play' products, Jaldhara Technologies Pvt. Ltd. boasts of doing just that.

## Cleantech is the right tech

Incorporated in October 2010, Jaldhara Technologies, a subsidiary of Mauritius-based Greywater Technologies, is a new player in the waste water management and effluent treatment sector. The company's range of products, which go by the name of Grewa, are suitable for residential, commercial and industrial purposes.

Conceptualised by Harshad Bastikar (53), Director and CEO of Jaldhara, these products have an edge over conventional counterparts as they use clean technology. This means that no hazardous chemicals are used or emitted in the entire process of treatment.

The sludge content, which is bio degradable, can be discharged without any fear of toxic contents. "We are here to change the way the world treats its waste water," says Bastikar.

The conventional way of treating waste water sees the government handling it in a centralised manner.

This essentially means that all the waste water from every part of a city is collected in the sewage system and then treated. The treated water is then recycled or discharged into the oceans.

Jaldhara takes a detour from these norms and aims at treating waste water at the point of its discharge—at its very source. Decentralisation of waste water treatment not only reduces the load on the ever overflowing drains but also makes the consumer of water self-sustaining to a large extent. "By using our products, 70 percent of the treated water can be recycled," claims Bastikar.

## Or is it?

One of the major challenges faced by Team Jaldhara is the way clients perceive waste water treatment.

The fact that it uses a technology which is quite different from conventional ones gives way to a lot of questions about its credibility. "We have

never lost a client because of cost differences but only because of our inability to convince our products can do the same job in a much better way," adds Bastikar.

The only way forward is to create awareness amongst the masses regarding Cleantech. Hence, from time to time, Jaldhara holds technical seminars in various parts of the country, Bastikar informs.

The startup hasn't involved or collaborated with the government in any of its projects as yet.

This doesn't seem to worry Bastikar as he feels that at some point the government will have to take cognizance of their innovative technology. Right now, he is happy to provide support from outside. "The need of the hour is to have a proper regulatory framework for water consumption and discharge in place," stresses Bastikar.

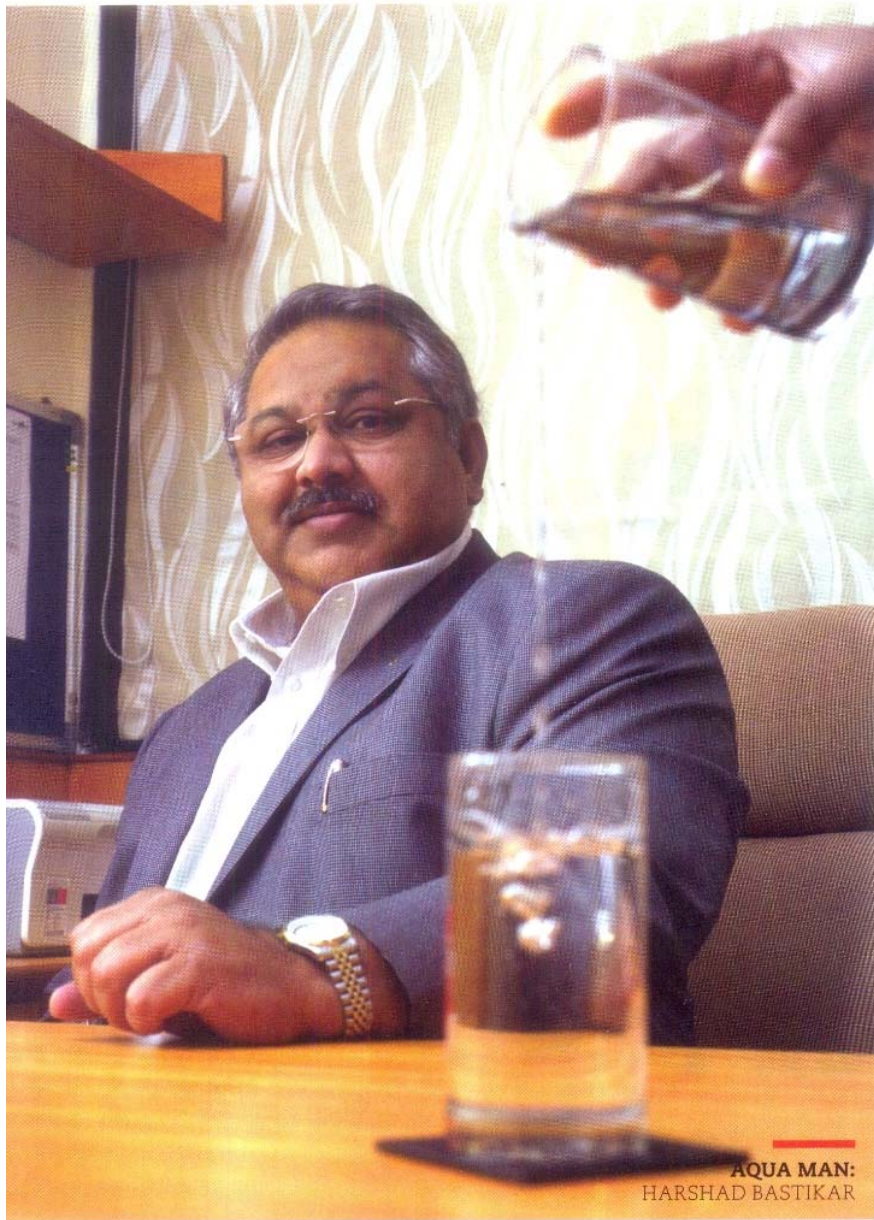
The water policy of India is in the making for a while now. Unlike every other source of energy, no incentives are applicable when it comes to water consumption.

## Flowing and fast

Things are cruising along for Jaldhara, and there is little doubt that it is helmed by the right person.

With a work experience of over 29 years, including a senior management stint at Thermax's water and waste solutions business, Bastikar quit his job to set off on this course.

Till date he has managed to recruit 40 like-minded people in his team and has three regional offices in Mumbai, New Delhi and Pune. The



**AQUA MAN:**  
HARSHAD BASTIKAR

manufacturing unit of the company is in Vapi, Gujarat. Jaldhara also boasts of having a pan-India presence with a 15 member direct sales team in various states across the country.

The company has raised ₹9 crore from Nexus Venture Partners in May 2011. Says Anup Gupta, Managing Director, Nexus Venture Partners, "We were really impressed with the unique and innovative idea of Jaldhara Technologies to come up

with a compact waste water treatment system using clean technology. With urbanisation increasing at a fast pace in this country, we all need our own potable water treatment equipments". According to Bastikar, the investment was used in two parts— primarily to build infrastructure, to launch Jaldhara in the market and also to ramp up the technology.

With a turnover of ₹7.5 crore in its first year, Jaldhara aims to touch

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TECHNOLOGIES

revenues of ₹30 crore by the end of this financial year.

Other than aiming for huge monetary gains in the next five years, Team Jaldhara is also looking at opportunities for acquisitions.

Bastikar says he is on the lookout for an Indian company with a wide market reach so that it can expand its distributor base across the country.

#### **Because every drop matters**

Bastikar is of the opinion that people should be charged for every drop of water they use, just like cooking gas—an opinion that is sure to ruffle feathers in a society and economy like ours. He says this is necessary as it will reduce the wastage of fresh water.

Studies conducted by the European Business and Technology Centre show that the agricultural sector uses around 79 percent of the available freshwater supply and wastes half of it. Likewise, four-fifths of irrigation water meets with the same fate.

The domestic sector consumes around six percent while the industrial sector consumes around five percent of fresh water.

Recycled water used for non-potable purposes therefore serves as a huge solution.

Bastikar points out that waste water management cannot be seen within the prism of doing social good—it is a matter that calls for urgent attention as India's population continues to explode in unmanageable proportions and our natural water resources face further degradation. ■