

## World Water Day 2021: JICA raises respect for the most valuable resource of earth

~ Valuing Water ~

**New Delhi, March 19, 2021:** This year's theme for the annual World Water Day observed on March 22, is 'Valuing Water' and in line with JICA's objectives. As we celebrate and reiterate the value of water, it is important to remember that the day is being marked in the age of climate change and a pandemic. In case of India, water problem is very acute, nearly half the country's population faces high-to-extreme water stress and about 200,000 die each year due to inadequate access to safe water\*. Given the multifarious threats of water shortage and contamination of the resources, JICA proposes a multifaceted approach which should be considered to overcome this pressing challenge.

Present establishment in India advocates to promote the Jal Jeevan Mission with a starting endowment funds of Rs. 3.5 trillion and the goal "to provide to all households in rural area safe and adequate water through individual household tap connections by 2024". The Jal Jeevan Mission subsumed the older National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), preserving the goal "to provide Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household "by 2024.

**Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, JICA India,** said, *"As the world emerges out of an unprecedented situation, which has profoundly affected the social and economic sectors globally, we have learnt several critical lessons. The water sector plays an important role in the fight against disasters of such magnitude, which is not a mystery anymore, as safe water supply and improved sanitation is crucial for prevention of a pandemic. With the world surging toward recovery from this once in a lifetime crisis, it is important to apply the SDG theme of "leave no one behind", especially when it comes to sprucing up water and sanitation for all",* he added.

The overall contribution to the sector has been 37 ODA Loans, 4 Grant Aids and 12 Technical Cooperation Projects. With JICA's projects, water supply has catered to approximately 30 million people and 15 million people have received access to sanitation.

Due to the pandemic there is more focus on maintaining sanitation and washing hands than ever before. It is very important to use water wisely so that prevention of the spread of the virus doesn't lead to depletion of other precious resource – water.

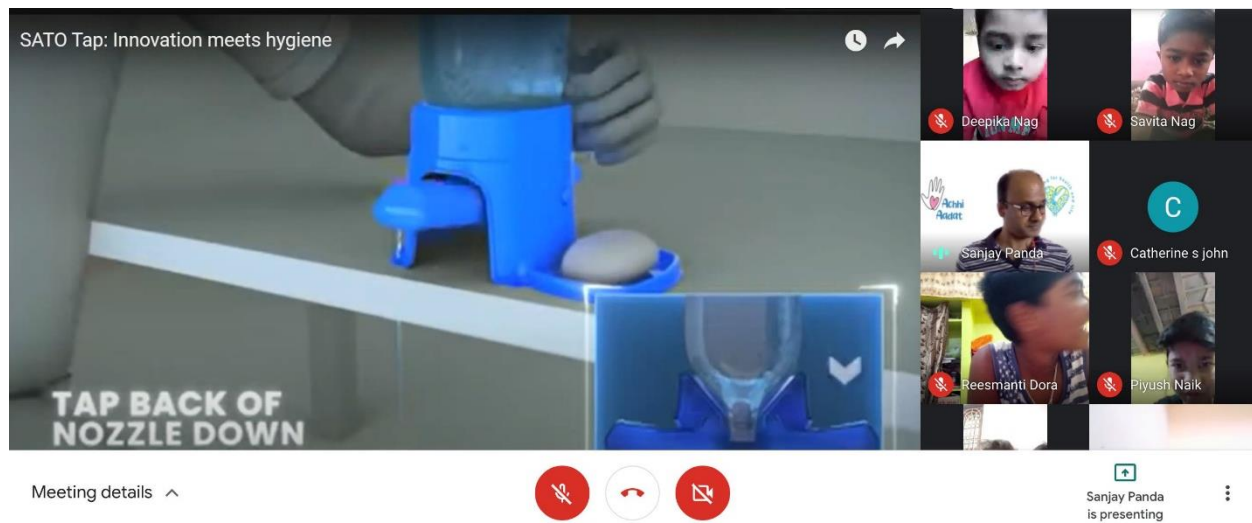
JICA recently launched the "Achi Aadat Campaign" to sensitize people for appropriate handwashing and other hygiene practices, collaborating with Japanese companies. One of the partners is LIXIL which produces SATO tap, a portable handwashing station suitable for the environment where water is scarce or handwashing facility is not available. Utilizing the donated products like SATO Tap, JICA is reaching out to the targeted children to teach them "Good habits" to protect them from viruses that cause infectious diseases including the COVID-19. SATO Tap enables washing hands upto 8-10 times in just 1 litre of water, it especially is a boon to low income families who can use it with ease.

JICA recently conducted a workshop to create awareness for taking countermeasures against COVID-19 wherein, safeguarding measures for the prevention and control of the disease were discussed. JICA

**\*Data Source: Niti Ayog Composite water resource management 2018-19.**

proposed this matrix to maintain the economic, social and health systems at workplaces. The dignitaries from various organisations such as **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) Ministry of Finance, Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board (OWSSB), Larsen & Toubro (L&T)**, were part of this workshop.

The workshop witnessed pressing concerns such as educational activities, water-related precautions, need for hand washing facilities, adequate provision of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment), thorough implementation of social distancing, setting up of monitoring committees at construction sites, and securing of budgets.



A virtual session of Achhi Aadat Campaign for school children to show them the correct way of handwashing and how to use SATO Tap, which were later installed at their school premises

## About JICA

Established, by a specific law, as an incorporated administrative institution under the Government of Japan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) aims to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation, as a sole Japanese governmental agency in charge of ODA implementation. JICA is the world's largest bilateral donor agency. JICA works as a bridge between Japan and emerging countries, and provides assistance in forms of loan, grant and technical cooperation so that the emerging countries can strengthen their capabilities.

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