

case 1-428-987
December 30, 2009

Bringing Safe Water to India's Villages and Communities: The Naandi Foundation

...A recent survey of national opinion revealed that when asked what would make respondents proud of India, a staggering 73% said that availability of safe drinking water to all our people would truly make them proud of being an Indian...

— Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh¹

In 2002, Dr. K. Anji Reddy, Naandi's chairman and founder, was staying at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo when he was struck by the sight of a sign that said, simply: "the tap water in this toilet is potable." He then came back to India and found the same sign at an Oberoi property in India. Realizing that the affluent people of India have access to clean and drinkable water even in the toilet, yet the majority of India's public health expenditure goes to treating waterborne diseases, Dr. Reddy became determined to bring safe drinking water to India's villages. As a doctor and a farmer's son, Dr. Reddy was also acutely aware how many problems stem from unsafe water.

Water and Poverty

According to the World Water Development Report (WWDR), problems of poverty are, on most occasions, inextricably linked with those of water—its availability, its proximity, its quantity, and its quality. Worldwide, over 1 billion people lack access to a reliable supply of clean water. The problem is especially acute in the developing world, with waterborne ailments accounting for 80% of disease and deaths and an estimated 2% drag on developing countries' GDP². It is beyond debate that improving the access of poor people to safe water has the potential to make a major contribution toward poverty eradication. In fact, access to clean water has factored into each of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals³, and top technologists have begun searching for improved technological solutions.

India suffers a particularly large health burden due to poor water quality. The WHO's Safe Water, Better Health report in 2008 suggested that 780,000 deaths in India are directly a result of poor water and sanitation⁴. Diarrhea alone causes more than 1,600 deaths each day—more than any other disease. It is estimated that 37.7 million Indians are affected by waterborne diseases annually and 73 million working days are lost due to waterborne disease each year. WaterAid estimates an economic burden of \$600 million

Published by GlobalLens, a division of the William Davidson Institute at the University of Michigan.



© 2010 William Davidson Institute. This case was written by Josh Katz and Sheel Mahnat under the supervision of Allen Hammond with Jim Koch and Sherill Dale as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of an administrative situation. This case study was supported by a generous grant from the Skoll Foundation.