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WQIA launches first microbiological standard for water treatment devices

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These standards have been specifically developed for Indian conditions and match global norms.

Statistics compiled by the United Nations (UN) show that over one lakh people die of water-borne diseases annually in India.

It is reported that groundwater in one-third of India's 600 districts is not fit for drinking as the concentration of fluoride, iron, salinity and arsenic exceeds the tolerance levels.

About 65 million people have been suffering from fluorosis, a crippling disease due to high amount of fluoride and five million are suffering from arsenicosis in West Bengal alone, due to high amount of arsenic.

The World Bank estimates 21% of communicable diseases in India are water related.

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Of these diseases, diarrhea kills more than a 1000 people in India every day.

The highest mortality from diarrhea is in children under the age of five, highlighting an urgent need for focused interventions.

WQIA also released a quality seal that will help consumers choose water treatment devices that meet these standards.

This development marks an important step towards ensuring genuine standards for water quality in a country where water-borne diseases are a major health hazard.

Water Treatment Devices meeting WQIA standards are required to demonstrate effectiveness to eliminate all three types of disease causing organisms of concern (bacteria, virus & parasites), over an extended period of its life.

Certified devices are also required to alert the user when repair or replacement is due and if any residue in treated water from the device is safe.

Commenting on this landmark development, the president of WQIA Mr Marzin R Shroff, said, "The available purifying technologies are designed to solve a few of the many different water quality problems. If the input water contains material outside the designated specific contaminants addressed by the device it may not be removed. Not all the contaminants may be a priority. Therefore it was important to have standards that address Indian water conditions and we are glad that the industry has come together to support and adopt these standards - ultimately benefitting the customer."

More than 10 Indian Water Purifier manufacturers have pledged to adopt these standards which were released at the 2nd WQA India Meeting.

These include leading brands like Eureka Forbes, Kent RO, Alfa UV, Filtrex, AO Smith, Ion Exchange, Luminous, Tata Swachh among others.

Together these WQIA members represent more than 70% of water purifier sales in India.

The WQIA members also stressed on the need to ensure that all water purifiers sold in India meet these norms. The members urged the government to take adequate steps to ensure that purified drinking water norms are mandated to ensure reliable sources of drinking water for consumers.