

Business Standard

Driptech launches products in AP

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Driptech Inc, a Silicon Valley-based water technologies company which has its India office in Pune, on Monday roped in Hyderabad-based social enterprise AgSri as the exclusive distributor for its micro-irrigation systems in Andhra Pradesh.

"Andhra Pradesh is heading for an acute water crisis owing to ground water depletion. Driptech offers viable solutions to small farmers in the current situation. We are primarily targeting to reach to marginal farmers in the state through AgSri's distribution network," Peter Frykman, founder and chief executive of Driptech, told mediapersons here.

According to the state ground water department study conducted between November 2010 and November 2011, the water table in the state as a whole has dropped by an average 2.53 metre, pushing the state into a water crisis. The state government had recently declared more than three-fourths of its administrative blocks (mandals) - 876 out of 1,128 - as drought-hit.

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Driptech forayed into the Indian market through a tie-up with Godrej Agrovat in 2011. At present, around 200 smallholding farmers in China, 200 in Tanzania and over 2,000 in India use its low-cost drip irrigation systems optimised for vegetables, floriculture and major commercial crops like sugarcane, cotton, chillies and turmeric.

Frykman said the company



currently manufactured its products in China, and was contemplating setting up a local manufacturing plant once it reached the scale of 5,000 farmers in India within a year.

"Our focus is to expand into more markets here. We are now present in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. We are exploring the Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka markets, and expect to enter them in a couple of months," he said, adding the company would be going in for patenting its manufacturing technology shortly.

Driptech systems are priced

at Rs 12,000 per acre (for a four-year system), as compared with traditionally, commercially-viable drip irrigation systems, which cost around Rs 50,000 an acre, according to Biksham Gujja, founder and chairman, AgSri.

"Driptech systems provide highly-uniform water application even with low pressure. After switching from flood irrigation, yields typically increase at least 30 per cent, and water usage declines 60 per cent. Farmers can recoup the price of the system in as little as six months," he added.