

# Pune design firm shapes Tata's water purifier

Dileep Athavale | TNN

**Pune:** When thirsty Indians will drink pure water from the sub-Rs 1,000 Swach water purifier which Tata Group chief Ratan Tata unveiled on Monday, what they will touch and feel is what is created by city-based design firm Design Directions Private Limited.

The 560 mm tall unit that offers itself as a low cost preventive mechanism against water-borne diseases for India's masses, has shaped up after more than three years of toil by Design Directions' directors Satish and Falguni Gokhale and team in their studio in Pune.

"It was a tiring journey of dozens of sketches, and renderings and e-mails going back and forth," Falguni Gokhale told TOI, adding that Tatas wanted a perfect product and nothing half-baked would do.

Swach is an innovative water purifier which gives clean drinking water without using electricity or running water — often not available in rural India. The core technology, developed by Tata Research, Development and Design Centre and Tata Chemicals, uses a filter made from rice husk ash and impregnated with nano-silver particles. It has the capacity to kill bacteria and disease causing organisms and purifies 3,000 litres of water.

"Once the technology was finalised and tested, we were mandated to design the container and other features," recounts Satish Gokhale. "The most important part of our brief was the target selling price of Rs 999. The design had



Director of Design Directions Satish Gokhale with the Tata's Rs 999 water purifier

to therefore be simple in construction, easy to manufacture and easy to use."

Most details about the materials and methodology that went into manufacture of Swach is under wraps, but Gokhale said there was the dual need of using right priced material without compromising on the strength of the unit and its usability.

Design Directions team made sure that Swach is simple in construction, easy to manufacture and looks 'up market,' informed Gokhale. "We also incorporated an indicator that shows the life of

the filter which has to be changed every 3,000 litres," he said. He also noted that his firm had suggested Su Jal (good water) as the brand name for the purifier but the Tatas' branding team favoured Swach.

Among the winner features of Swach which Design Directions added was pattern of the upper chamber which will facilitate its cleaning by hands and the 'stackability' of the two chambers which reduced the height of the box used for packaging. The latter, which makes it possible to fit one inside the other ensures that more packs can be carried in one truck.