

Avrist – 3rd feb 2021

*Bottom up innovations in poor urban
settlements,
an ambiguous panacea?*

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'Jugaad Innovation is the most comprehensive book yet to appear on the subject'—*The Economist*

JUGAAD



INNOVATION

A FRUGAL AND FLEXIBLE APPROACH
TO INNOVATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

NAVI RADJOU, JAIDEEP PRABHU & SIMONE AHUJA



66-YO Bengalurean Develops Low-Cost RWH System, Has Not Purchased Water For 6 Years

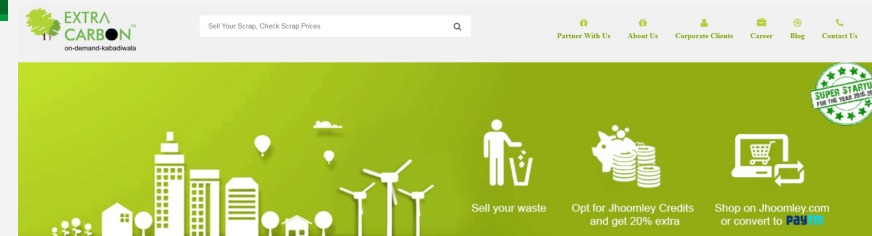
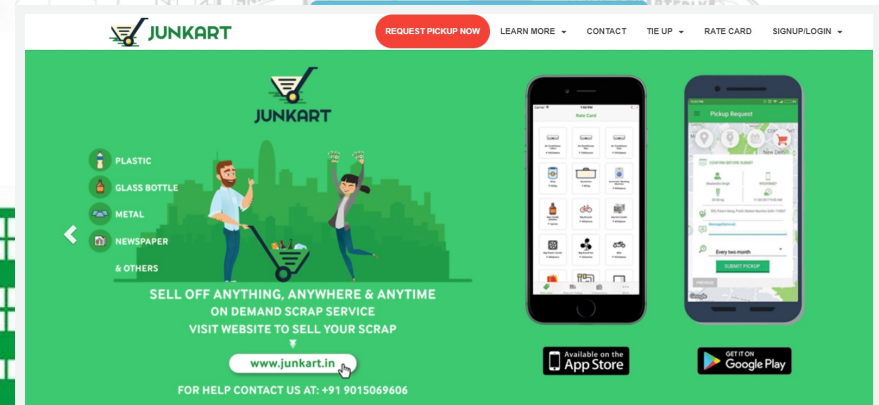


This Low-Cost Technology Is Helping a Puducherry Village Treat Its Wastewater, and It Uses Plants!



Source: thebetterindia.com

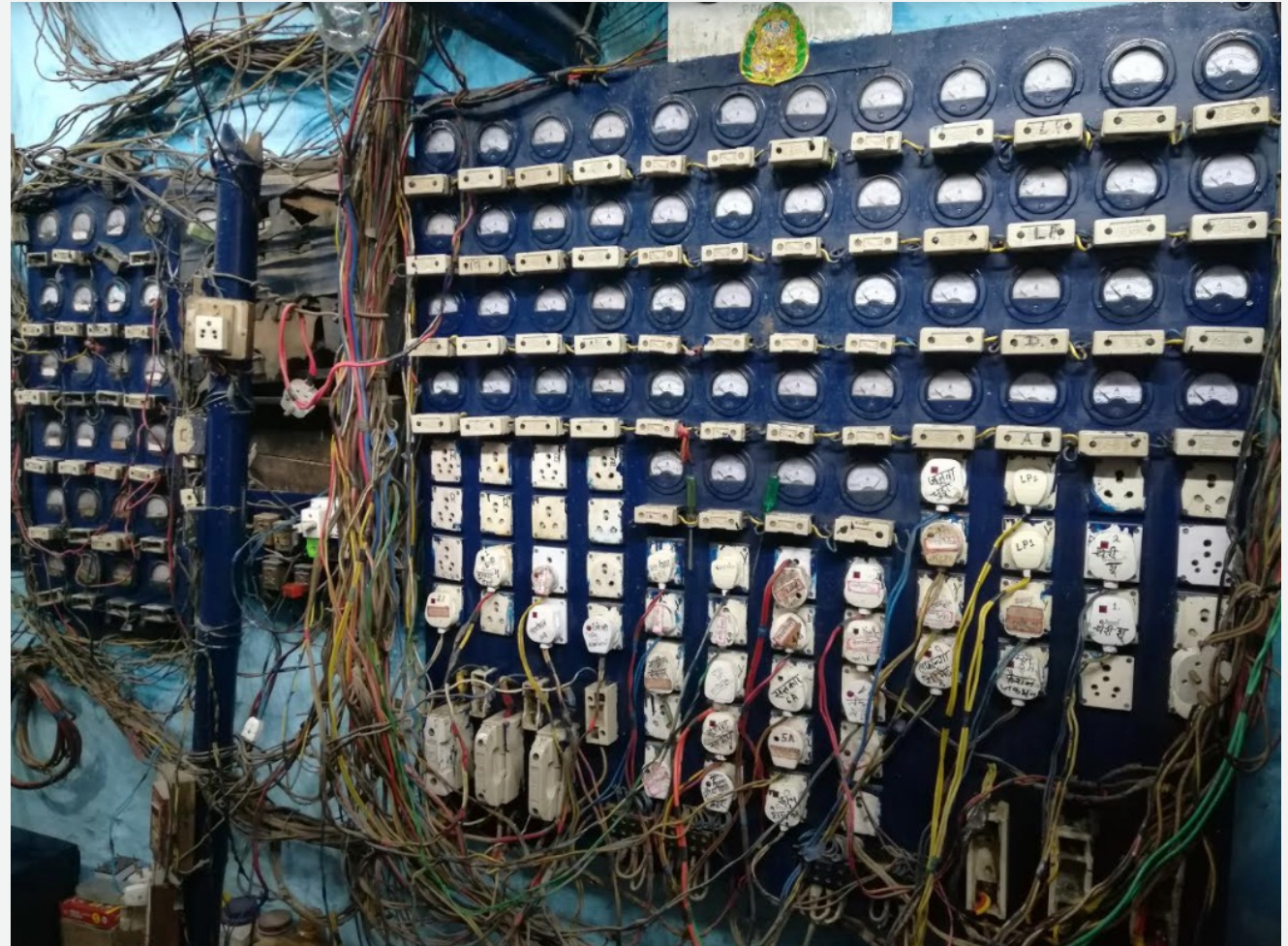
Some of local arrangements, developed in the margins of the city, can be seen as innovative



“traditional” kabariwala → an inspiration for “innovative” mobile based application launched by indian start-up

In urban areas non-connected to infrastructure networks, local solutions demonstrates inventivity to provide:

*electricity services :
cf. on-going work of Bérénice
Girard, in small towns in
Bihar, where people are
accessing electricity through
private networks powered by
a kerosene generator*



Source: Bérénice Girard, 2018 (Anr HYBRIDELEC)

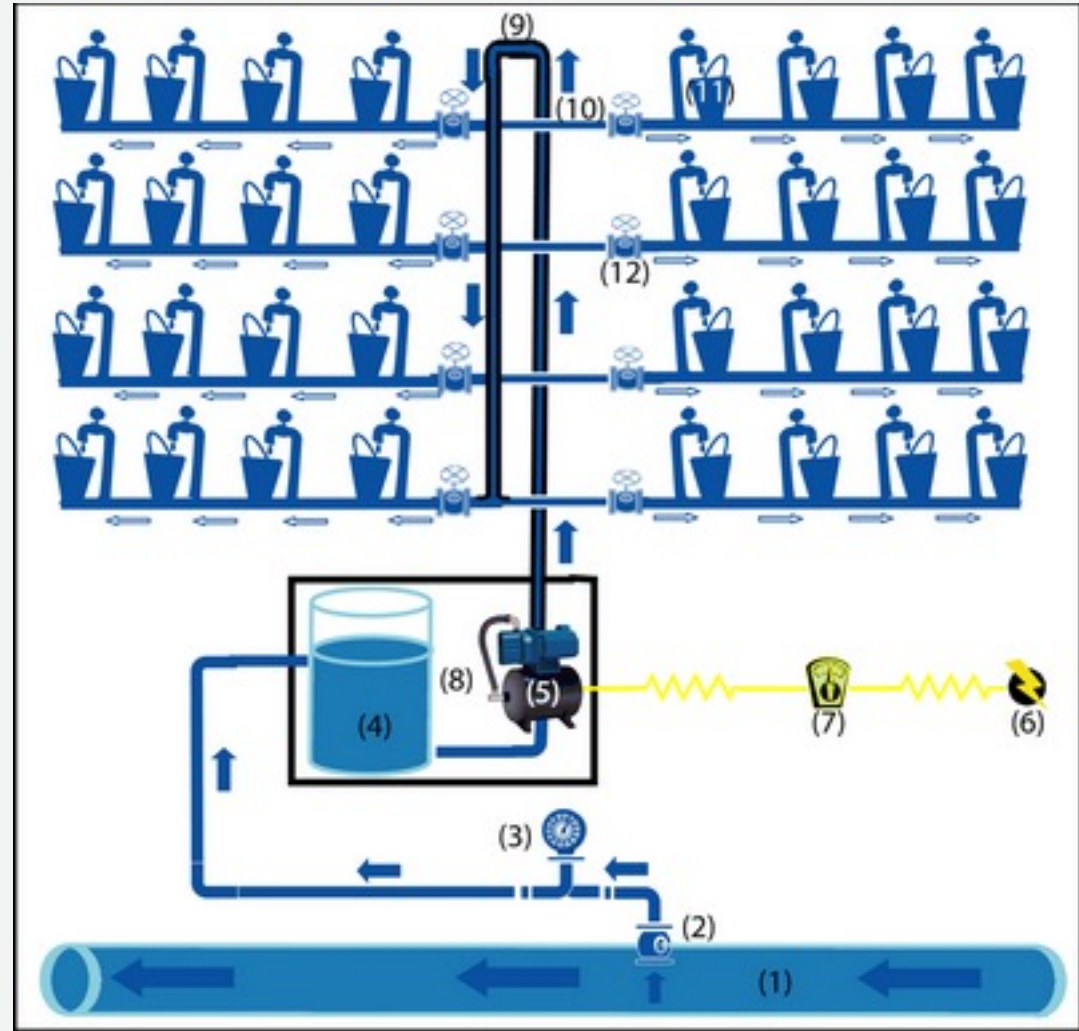
In urban areas non-connected to infrastructure networks, local solutions demonstrates inventivity to provide:

water services :

*cf. small community networks
(cf. Bercegol Desfeux 2011 in a
slum Mumbai;*

or

*in Kharkhauda , a small
town of Haryana where a
private network deliver water
(Zérah , 2020, p.218),*



Source: Bercegol Desfeux 2011

In urban areas non-connected to infrastrucure networks, local solutions demonstrates inventivity to provide:

*water services :
cf. private water lorries to
supply end of network
areas (in Bangalore,
Ranganath 2014, or
Mumbai Angueletou,
2009)*

*...which are sometime
institutionalized like in
Chennai*



In urban areas non-connected to infrastrucure networks, local solutions demonstrates inventivity to provide:

*Sewerage/sanitation;
cf. "honey suckers"
emptying septic tanks in
off network areas*

*Ex: such as in Aya
nagar, an urban village
in the South of Delhi,
not connected to the
sewerage network
(Delhi, Zerach 2020,
p.220)*

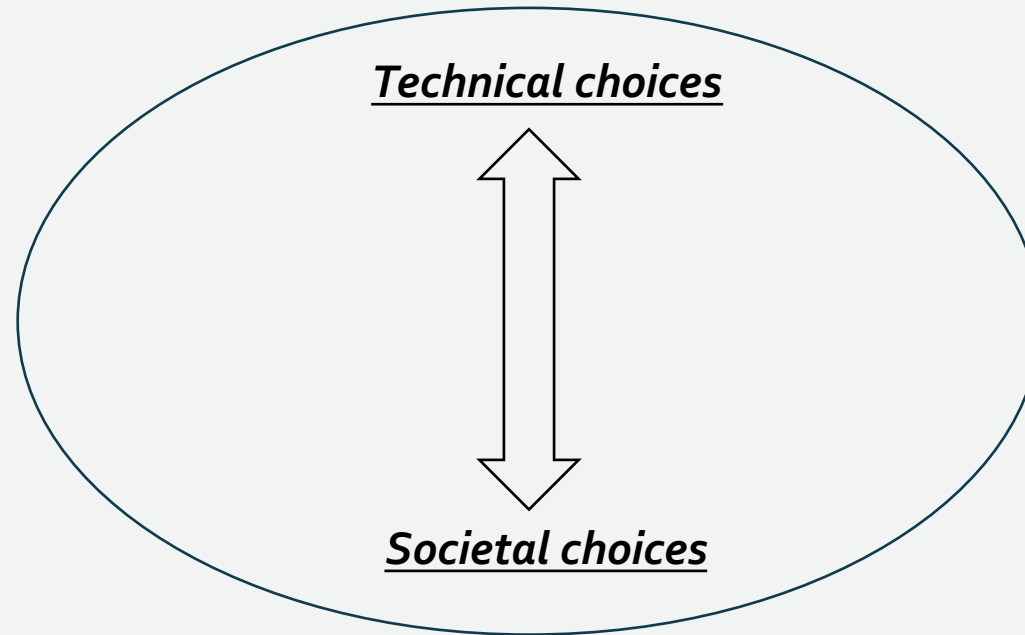


Ambiguity of labelling as “innovative” some of these local arrangements set-up to access basic services

Thinking in terms of essential services is a good way to de-romanticise the idea of “bottom-up innovations”



- Basic Urban Services are essential for economic growth, social cohesion & environmental sustainability of human settlements.



- Providing a basic service is not only a **technical (or financial)** question, but it's also a **societal choice**
 - Formalising an “**innovation**” is not politically “**neutral**”: it entails far more than merely providing a service.
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Talking about “bottom up innovations” for basic urban services reflects a shift that can be seen either as:

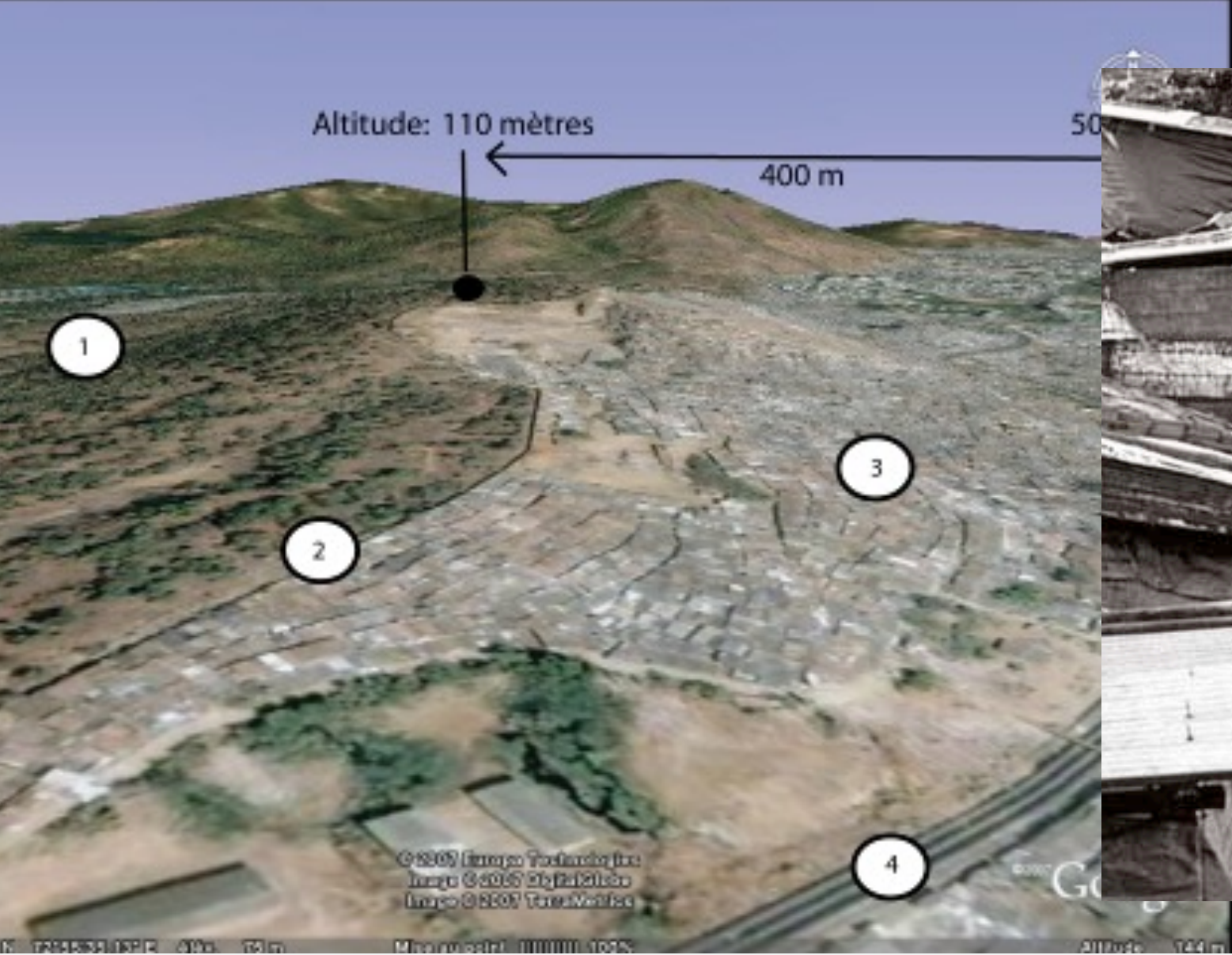
- a failure from one side:
 - you acknowledge that the conventional network model is not functioning well enough to provide the same universal service to all citizens;
 - A pragmatic turn (Jaglin 2015) from the other side:
 - you recognise that some alternative can exist and that a local “solution”, can help to solve the problem:
“Bottom up innovation” to universalise essential service to all
-

- in cities where slum dwellers have nothing, no public service, no legal entitlements, the poor have no choice but to find alternatives, to be “innovative”, in response to unmet demands for basic services, such as water and electricity, through small scale private providers or CBO, etc.
 - So alternative are *de facto* existing, for survival reasons sometimes, in places where State and basic services are missing
 - → a kind of **informal production of service, that could seem innovative**
 - **...could the institutionalization of these pre-existing alternatives, be a co-produced solution ?**
-

co-production of water service in Ram Nagar, a slum of Mumbai:



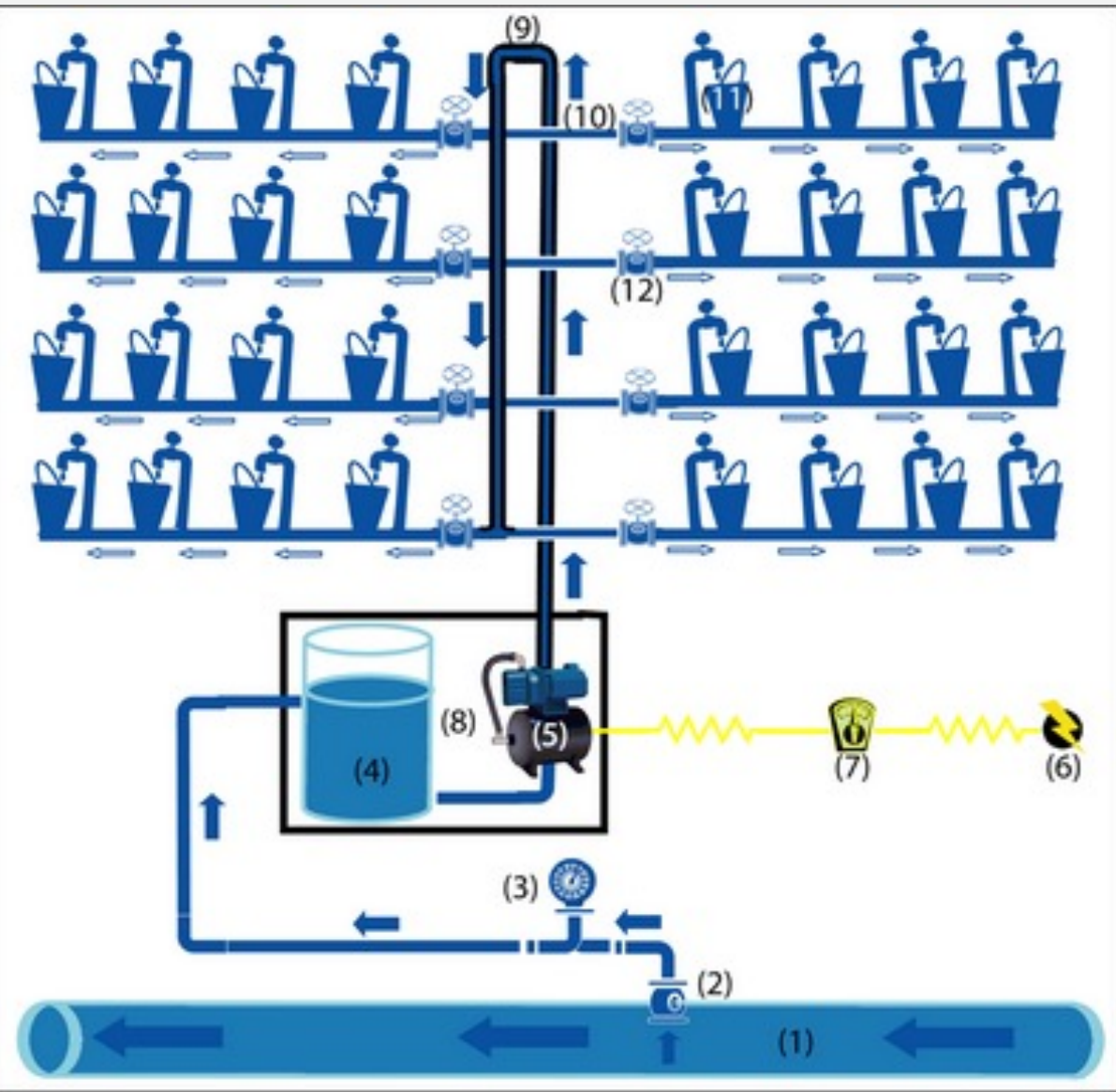
co-production of water service in Ram Nagar, a slum of Mumbai:



→ *It remains a mediocre service:
Co-production as the formalisation
of heterogeneity (inequality)?*

→ *Is this « innovation » a result
of network model failure or
does it reflect a state failure?*

→ *« pragmatic turn »...
...or « cynical turn » ?*



ambivalence of talking of « bottom-up innovations » in poor urban settlements

→ It paradoxically tends to formalise socio-spatial exclusion and heterogeneity :

« 2nd class services » for « 2nd class citizens »

→ But it remains a situation of « better than nothing »

« (2nd class) services » for « (2nd class) citizens »

Labelling local solutions as « innovative » contributes to an ambivalent recognition of urban poor

it acknowledges inequality by officialy formalising it without necessary fighting it

Thank you!

