**A closer look at the informal water market in Kenya (0-4.30mins)**

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**Interviewer:** In today’s episode we discuss informal water in Kenya. Joining us is Anindita Sarkar, an assistant professor at the University of Delhi in India. She starts by discussing what an informal water market is.

**AS:** So as the name suggests, it’s an informal water market, so it’s about water market, and as you know, in markets we buy and sell. It’s very simple – in water markets we buy and sell water. But here it’s an informal water market… and the sellers are private providers. So the private providers facilitate the relocation of water across competing users. The water market – the ?? – technically can refer to a variety of transactions which involves a range of water-related goods and services. So some scholars believe that since water is a common property resource, technically one cannot sell water, because you do not own water. So in that case in can mean the selling of water services. In the informal water market the water has a value additions. So although you do not own the water, once you procure it you value-add to it, and the value addition happens because of its distribution, packing and treatment.

**Interviewer:** Professor Sarkar, then discussed the situation in Mathare, a large informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya, where her research was conducted.

She also looked at the information of water ATMs in Nairobi. These are installed by NGOs and is a public-private partnership model. It aims to provide users with cheap, clean water on demand. They swipe a smart card and collect.

**AS:** We are looking at water supply systems where the public utility is not providing water sufficiently, so there are people who are unserved, totally, or the supply is inadequate. So in the slums what has happened is they are informal settlements and only 10% of the households have ?? supply at home, where they get water in their home. The other 90% are depending on community sources. The community sources are two types which are: the water is coming from the utility via the standpipe, and the second are these water ATMs. So the standpipes are these shared pipes, where people can go and buy water. Most of the time the standpipe managers will collect the price, so as you buy you can pay. The other model which has come up, which is very, very innovative, and a very new concept that has come in, the water ATM. Water ATMs are extremely cheap – only 50 cents for 20 litres. The problem with these is that they are very inadequate in number. The main problem with these water ATMs is that the prices are very low, but they are all located at the same place – on the road – and water, since it is very heavy, and you have to understand that culturally and historically women and children always procure water – so it’s very difficult for women and children to fill water and carry it long distances. So most people who are not located near these ATMs cannot access water.

The water vendors have started taking out water from these ATMs and they are selling it. The prices are like 10 – 15 times higher. Wherever there are these utilities providing water at low cost unfortunately the vendors will come and take out water from the ATM, which is very cheap; they will take water from the standpipes, which is comparatively cheaper; sometimes they can illegally cut though municipality networks, and in that case what will happen is the people who have the private connections they also do not have water because the pipes are cut and somebody else is stealing water. So through all these sources the vendors will take water and sell the same water at a very high price.