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London, Nov 10 (IANS) A revolutionary ultrasonic attachment for taps boosts water's ability to clean.

Tim Leighton, professor at University of Southampton, and Peter Birkin's device works with cold water, minimal additives and consumes as much electrical power as a light bulb.

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Its application will be wide — licenses have already been sold to a number of industries to look at cleaning in food preparation, hospitals, manufacturing and homes.

Currently, industry uses excessive water, power and additives for cleaning. For example, it can take up to 100 tonnes of water to produce just a tonne of clean wool after shearing, according to a university statement.

Many industrial processes also generate large quantities of contaminated run-off. The water from hosing down an abattoir represents a real health risk and cannot be allowed to enter the water supply.

Purifying run-off is costly — each cubic metre of water used for cleaning in the nuclear industry can cost around 10,000 pounds to subsequently treat.

"Society runs on its ability to clean. Ineffective cleaning leads to food poisoning; failure of manufactured products such as precision watches and microchips; and poor construction — from shipbuilding to space shuttles — since dirty surfaces do not bond," says Leighton.

The impact on healthcare is huge — hospital-acquired infections from instruments that aren't properly cleaned cost a lot.

The device uses less water and power than the equivalent pressure washer (two litres per minute compared to 20 litres per minute and less than 200 watts,

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compared to 2,000 watts).

It is also far less damaging as the stream pressure is less than 1/100th that of a pressure washer.

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