

Step forward: Experimental forest patch brings up water level to 10 feet

Percolating sewerage contaminates ground water

BANGALORE: The water crisis in the City is compounded by the contamination of already depleting ground water.

The contamination is rapidly increasing in urban pockets where people, unaware of conservation and recharging techniques, are inadvertently contributing to the water pollution.

In the areas newly included in the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits where Underground Drainage (UGD) system is non-existent, pits are dug in front of houses to let out the sewerage. The prolonged stagnation results in percolation of sewerage adding pollutants to the pure water underground.

Borewell water turns salty

Residents of Ramamurthy-nagar have already started getting salty water from their borewells. "The water we are now receiving is unfit for human consumption. People have been suffering from health problems such as diarrhoea and vomiting," said Anjanappa, a resident.

Citizens have also been

IISc shows the way to tackle crisis

Subhash Chandra N S

BANGALORE: While the Government cuts down trees to widen roads and cries over the depleting ground water table, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has shown that developing a mini forest with native species in its campus can actually reverse the depletion.

The mini forest on just two acres of land adjoining the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) has raised the water table to a depth of just 10 feet, a big jump from 200 feet deep.

The forest was developed in 1985 by Dr T V Ramachandra, Faculty and Senior Scientist, Energy and Wetland Department, and Harish Bhat, a researcher from CES. It was started as an experiment to study adaptability and succession of the Western Ghats plants in the City's conditions.

Started on a parthenium and other weed infested patch, this mini forest now spreads across two acres and hosts over 40 species of Western Ghats plants and five local species. The forest stands as a counter to the City's indiscriminate planning that has drained the ground water.

"Loss of green cover for road



Deccan Herald takes a look at the acute water shortage through a new series "Thirsty City."

Send in your valuable feedback, views and suggestions to dhreporting@gmail.com

widening and construction of concrete structures has been mainly responsible for the depleting water level in the City. Our experiment establishes how tree cover can improve the water level," said Dr Ramachandra.

The green cover in the City, including arboriculture, is necessary for percolation of water and ground water recharge. He

pointed that creating such small forest patches and increasing tree cover will not only increase ground water level, but will also have an impact on the micro climate of the City.

"Our study on urban ecology has proved that places denuded of tree cover will be converted into heat islands and has put the ground water table into severe stress. But places, where tree cover is more, is comparatively cool," he added.

IISc's mini forest now hosts wetter forest species from Western Ghats including *Mitragyna parviflora* and *Lophopetalum wightianum* and moist species like *Jiana Entada purshetha* (a giant creeper found in both moist deciduous forest and western ghats). "Surprisingly all these plants, both Western Ghats species and native species including a rattan variety (*Calamus prastinus*), which has rarely been reported of growing in drier areas have adapted very well and have yielded amazing results," said Dr Ramachandra.

He added that through this research it has now been established that native species play a major role in holding water and increasing ground water table.

DH News Service



DAILY GRIND Residents of T Dasarahalli and Bagalakunte waiting with empty pots at a public tap at Bagalakunte in Bangalore on Friday. DH photo

Govt promises 24/7 water by 2013

BANGALORE: Ten wards in the City are slated to have continuous water supply 24 hours a day throughout the week, if a pilot project planned by BWSSB in this connection succeeds.

This is part of an ambitious initiative undertaken by the Board to supply water to all 198 wards of the City by 2013.

BWSSB Minister Katta Subramanya Naidu told reporters that Sanjay Nagar, Aramane Nagar, Vasanth Nagar, Jayanagar, Rajaji Nagar, BTM Layout, Padmanabha Nagar and Gandhi Nagar figure among the wards chosen. "Work will commence by end of August and all the wards will get continuous water by the end of this year," he assured.

A couple of water sources within the City have been identified to boost water supply, Naidu said but did not specify the sources. He said the sources would ensure that the City receives an additional water supply of 15 TMC by end of 2012. "Five or six reservoirs will be constructed at different parts of

the City to store rainwater. They would be treated, purified and supplied as drinking water."

On the steps being taken to ensure implementation of Rain Water Harvesting structures in the City, Naidu said that BWSSB would be holding talks with banks to provide loans to homeowners to install them. "BWSSB would stand as guarantor for the consumer and ensure banks provide loans ranging between Rs 5,000 and Rs 25,000 for the public," he added.

On the feasibility of residents of all existing buildings meeting the deadline for implementing RWH (May 27), Naidu said a decision on the possibility of extending the deadline would be decided on April 15.

Earlier, the minister inspected the Harohalli pumping station and offered an update on the 13 projects being carried out under the Cauvery Water Supply IV Stage Second Phase, which is slated for completion by end of 2011.

DH News Service