

Almost half of Bengaluru depends on borewell water

Naveen Menezes

BENGALURU: Due to intermittent supply in some areas and non-existent Cauvery water pipes in others parts, 45% of Bengaluru depends on borewell water. Consequently, groundwater is being exploited even in the 110 villages which were added to Bengaluru Bruhat Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in 2007.

Under I, II, III and IV stages of Cauvery Water Supply Scheme, the BWSSB spent hundreds of crores to supply about 1,350 million litres of water a day (MLD) to the core area (245 sq km) and previous urban local bodies (330 sq km). However, residents of 110 villages (225 sq km) spread over five zones — Dasarahalli, Rajarajeshwarinagar, Bommanahalli, Mahadevapura and Byatarayanpura — are at the mercy of private water suppliers and borewells.

Experts point out that adding new areas to the BBMP without providing necessary infrastructure amounts to inviting disaster. In the past, though TMC areas were added to the Palike, they were not provided water supply, forcing residents to dig borewells.

It took almost 10 years to the BWSSB to supply water to 2 lakh houses in these areas. This has been the situation now in 110 villages, where there is no water supply.

Urbanist Ashwin Mahesh said that this trend would only



PARCHED: Bengaluru gets 1,350 million litres of water per day under Cauvery I, II, III and IV stage. But that is not proving sufficient, hence the dependence on borewells. DH FILE PHOTO

result in excessive use of groundwater besides encouraging the water tanker mafia. BWSSB has the responsibility to provide water to all citizens but its now limited to those houses with pipe connections.

The government lacks long-term vision, he said.

A former BWSSB engineer felt the Board's supplying barely reaches half of Bengaluru's population. Besides, houses getting Cauvery water still prefer to

have their own borewells due to intermittent supply.

This has resulted in high borewell water consumption," he said.

Sreenivasa Reddy, director of Karnataka State Natural Disas-

Water works

- Present supply from Cauvery: 1,350 MLD
- Present population served: 8.5 million
- Area of water supply served: 570 sq km
- House service connections: 8.65 lakh
- Total length of water pipes: 8,746 km
- Public taps providing free water: 7,477
- Water tankers: 62
- Average cost of water: Rs 28/kilolitre

ter Monitoring Centre said only 10% of the groundwater in the core area is recharged. "If there is 900 mm of rain in a year, only 100 mm gets recharged as the city consists of built up area, roads and footpaths with not enough space for recharge," he said. He also said peripheral areas were overexploiting groundwater due lack of water supply.

While it took nine years to set up water and sanitary infrastructure in TMC areas, it would take at least 3 years of work in the 110 villages. BWSSB engineer-in-chief S Krishnappa said the board has sought financial assistance from Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA).

It would cost Rs 2,611.70 crore to provide water supply to these area with a sewage component of Rs 1,698.04 crore, he said.

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