

## 35% population is left thirsty

It has been rightly predicted by someone that the next world war would be for water. The water crisis is getting severe by every passing day. Leave alone the crisis faced by world, nation or state, the situation faced by the state capital Bhopal will say it all. 30-35% population of the city is facing severe water shortage. Dreams of giving a metro status and look to the city are being nourished, without looking at the dark realities faced by 35% of people who do not have any access to wells, boring, water pump etc. And this is not just a story of two or three colonies, this is the situation of 255 public settlements where there is no arrangement of water supplies. These are factual figures revealed by a government survey. Important point that has to be noted in this matter is, people living in these 250 odd colonies do pay their property taxes and that means they live under municipal limits and are entitled to all basic amenities, yet are deprived of basic water needs.

Some of these colonies are recently developed. Areas on the outskirts of the city has been merged with the surrounding rural settlements to impart them with colony status. But some of these have been in municipal limits since ages. For example, the P and T colony and New Sindhi colony of ward 15 Bairasia Road. These colonies are 40-50 years old, but the people are still dependent on wells and baories for water requirements. In Sindhi Nagar and Shanti Nagar huge tanks are made by public support, where water from all the wells is collected and then supplied. Same condition is faced by settlements like Pushpa Nagar, Naveen Nagar, Krishna nagar, Khusipura etc. near Railway Station, Ansal apartments, Shymala colony and the likes. The corporation does't supply water to every house in Shanti Nagar, but has given a single connection to the big tank to take care of the whole place. Irony is that, not just the private settlements are facing the scarecity, the government areas are also in trouble. Places like

Sultania and Indira Gandhi are provided with temporary water arrangements.

Same is the situation with Doordarshan Colony, Reigional College campus, TTTI, Depot chouraha, A G Colony, Income Tax Colony, 23 and 25th Battallion, Wireless Colony, Railway Station, Railway Quaters, All India Radio, MPEB Office etc. where the water from wells is collected in a tank and supplied.

There are 70 wards under Bhopal Municipal Corporation's limits, which are divided in 14 Zones. The worst is the condition of ward 13. 120 settlements (colonies) of this ward does't get water supplies. New sprang colonies on J K Road like Minal Residency, Siddharth Lake city, Rishipuram, Regal Homes, Luv-Kush Nagar, Sukhsagar etc. fall within this zone. Similarly, in zone 14 there are 155 colonies with the same fate. Only 6 zones are fortunate where municipal corporation supplies water properly.

Bhopal has a population of 25 lakhs and tap water connections are mere 2.5 lakhs. Water consumed by these families of capital is 46 MGD. Out of this 33.5 MGD requirement is fulfilled by Kolar and rest 12.5 is take care of by the lake. Remaining 5-10% is fulfilled by other sources. The way the city has expanded and the population has grown, even the corporation is helpless. Presently supply of water to the areas, which previously enjoyed full supply is getting difficult. For the last more than an year water is supplied on alternate days. Under such circumstances water supply to new areas in almost impossible. Corporation says that people have purchased houses in such colonies where there were no proper sources of water. People did this on builder's claims that water would be supplied by corporation. Now the situation has takes bad turn. Conflicts for water happens everyday. In summers the sittuation gets worsened. Last year a few died in water wars.

The groundwater conditions are also quiet bad. The use of tubewell in private colonies is also affecting the groundwater levels. Water is getting polluted as well. Its also because of solid waste. Bairesia road is an example for that.

Now the 30-35% of population can only bank on Narmada water. Corporation says once the Narmada arrives whole city will get 24 hrs water supply with 12 meter pressure. If the government claims were to be believed Narmade water should have arrived by now, but the people of the city are still keeping their fingers crossed.