Several cities are grappling with water crises and raw sewage. The last part of the series on JNUNRM’s projects and the problems looks at how urban water supplies should act fast.

**WAKE UP CALL**

For cities to manage water, treat sewage

Radheshyam Jadhav | TNN

Pune: Big cities like Pune and Mumbai have lessons to learn from the precarious situation that saw themselves in a similar position. With little being done to boost depleting ground water levels and untreated sewage and drainage systems, the city’s water resources are becoming a cause for concern. Small and medium size urban cities like Satara and Kolhapur are in a similar state.

The quality of ground water resources in Maharashtra is about 1.38 lakh hectares, which accounts for 4.95% of the total ground water resources in the country. However, the state’s 9% of the total population accounts for 13% of the total ground water resources, as per the 2011 census. This indicates the per capita water available declines from an average of 2,000 cubic meters to only 250 to 300 cubic meters.

With several rivers, canals and drains in Maharashtra together, run for 1,600 km, the water resources in the rural areas are far from uniform. More than 33% of the total treated water supply schemes for drinking while 76% in rural areas people have to trudge for miles to get a pot of water.

Experts have offered solutions to augment the water supply by planning, restructing the irrigation system. The state government has approved Rs 2.6 billion for the drought relief and sewage for secondary purposes for the Andhra and Madan Medium Towns, respectively.

The central government is funding the overhaul of the water supply systems in the cities. But the local bodies still lack the initiative and resources to complete works like fixing leakages in water pipelines, said former Minister of Water Resources, Sandeep Shinde.

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**Waste management and pollution**

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