

Sewage treatment a huge challenge: Sunita Narain

Says city losing 35 to 40% water during distribution

Staff Reporter

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The city of Thiruvananthapuram, despite being on a par or ahead of several other cities when it came to water supply, faced huge challenges on account of sewage management, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) director-general Sunita Narain has said.

Addressing a high-level discussion on 'Challenges and future opportunities for waste management in Kerala' towards evolving new approaches, strategies and policies' organised by the Suchitwa Mission here on Friday, Ms. Narain said Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode were among the 71 cities that were studied countrywide for CSE's report. On the positive side, when it came to water supply, Thiruvananthapuram had a better litres-per-capita-daily (LPCD), at 207, than even Copenhagen in Denmark (110 LPCD).

However, when it came to managing water supply and ensuring proper sewage disposal, Thiruvananthapuram, just like most other Indian cities, suffered from a serious drawback — the lack of focus on sewage and an excess of

• More focus sought on sewage control component

• Modular solid-waste processing plants planned

focus on augmenting supply of water without looking at the distribution system or allied issues.

Allied issues

For instance, she pointed out that authorities in Thiruvananthapuram were coming up with several water supply schemes and sewage treatment plants (STP), but were not paying much attention to bringing down distribution losses or seeing to it that the entire sewage produced, which would roughly be about 80 per cent of the water consumed, reached the STPs.

The city was losing about 35 to 40 per cent of water during distribution and this was one area where attention was required so that the crippling energy costs of water supply and operation and maintenance costs were tackled.

While calling for inclusion of the sewage management component in every single water supply scheme, Ms. Narain pointed out that Thiruvananthapuram had grown fast, was still growing and at

the same time, had a backlog of areas to be fixed.

This included the sewage management aspect with issues like Vilappilsala raging on. This was a huge challenge, she said.

Backlog

Urban Affairs Minister Manjalamkuzhi Ali pointed out that the State never had a culture of disposing of its waste, but was now making fast strides on this aspect.

It was expected to clear the backlog in three to four years. There were issues like stringent opposition to waste disposal systems, with plastic shredding units being opposed by the public wherever the government managed to find land.

Poor demand

The Thiruvananthapuram Corporation had to face the situation of not receiving a single enquiry on its nationwide advertisement calling for takers of plastic waste, despite promising a daily supply of 10 tonnes, he said.

Suchitwa Mission executive director George Chack-

acherry, making a presentation on the State perspectives of waste management, said the State was looking at modern methods of waste management, and had shortlisted improved biomethanation and thermal technologies and an integrated system that combines both.

Bid process

The bid process for establishing modern modular municipal solid-waste processing plants (SWPP) on a pilot scale was completed in Thiruvananthapuram at three locations which would have 25-35 tonnes of waste per day (TPD) and the work of one such plant would soon begin under public-private-partnership (PPP) mode, he said.

The bid process for modern municipal SWPPs of 500 TPD each under PPP mode was on at Brahmapuram, Ernakulam, and Njelianparamba in Kozhikode, he said.

Minister for Panchayats M.K. Muneer, Local Self government Department (LSGD) Principal Secretary James Varghese, and LSGD secretary R.K. Singh also spoke.