

Indian cities swimming in their own waste

Center for Science and Environment's second volume of the seventh State of India's Environment report - Excreta Matters (71 cities: a survey), claims that India's cities are wallowing in their waste and the rivers becoming a dumping ground for it. In this report CSE profiles 71 cities on their waste water management capability and maps the state of groundwater and its sources. Each city is mapped to know more about its past, current and future water footprints, the amount of waste it generates and its disposal system.

Sunita Narain, Director General of CSE India in the report says, "India growing in its cities and this growth will have huge implications on the environment and development scenario of the future."

The findings if the report is to be believed are alarming. Each city shows that sourcing new water is an obsession for planners but not its management. Second, none of the cities were even mindful of their growing problem of waste from its water. This growth needs to be monitored and stimulate a policy change to address the surmounting problem of waste and pollution in the country.

Key Findings

THE HIMALAYA -- Water-rich but ecologically fragile

Dehradun, Jammu, Mussoorie, Nainital, Srinagar, Uttarkashi.

INDO-GANGETIC PLAINS - Need to reword pollution management strategies. These cities take water but give back only waste due to lack of drainage and money to operate the systems.

Agra, Allahabad, Amritsar, Bathinda, Delhi, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Kanpur, Lucknow, Mathura, Meerut, Patna, Yamunanagar & Jagadhri, 12 cities of Punjab (Khanna, Malout, Mansa, Budhlada, Baretta, Bhucho, Goniana, Kot Fatta, Maur, Raman, Rampura, Sangat)

EASTERN HIGHLANDS -This mineral rich region is the home of India's big industries. The rivers have turned into receptacles of industry effluents and the cities remain water-stressed and polluted.

Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Ranchi

THE NORTHEAST - With plenty of water, the challenge for this region is two fold: Building cities on hill tops and building cities on rivers. With no real water scarcity it needs structures to hold rainwater in times of scarcity. Result is plenty of water which gets wasted and waste is not turned back to water.

Aizawl, Guwahati, Siliguri

THE DESERT - It had innovative solutions for reusing its waste but growing affluence is making this region ape the wastefulness of water rich areas.

Alwar, Bhilwara, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS - Most of the cities are along the Narmada river which has a number of dams. However they are abandoning traditional water systems to pump water from the river. This comes at a huge cost. Electricity pumping charges are crippling water agencies.

Bhopal, Dewas, Gwalior, Indore, Jabalpur, Jhansi, Nagpur, Rajkot, Ujjain, Vadodara

THE DECCAN - These cities have a challenge of building a sustainable and affordable system for sourcing water and planning sewage systems.

Aurangabad, Bengaluru, Baramati, Hubli-Dharwad, Hyderabad, Pune, Solapur, Tumkur

COASTAL CITIES - These cities being rich can bring water and pay for it. Their challenge is to manage supply in large cities like Mumbai and manage sewage.

Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Cuttak, Kolkata, Kozhikode, Mumbai, Puducherry, Srikakulum, Surat, Thane, Thiruvananthapuram (ET 23-1-12)