

The State of the City

Water

Water

PROBLEMS

- Water security for the city has not received the attention it deserves. There is no long-term plan in place to meet the growing needs of the population.
- Although the metropolitan region receives a reasonable amount of rain annually, efforts to tap this have been minimal so far.
- Infrastructure for water management is old and in need of upgradation and/or replacement.
- ‘Commons’ water is widely extracted by the public with almost no regulation; this is especially scary because even the extent of underground sources is not known.
- Pricing of water is ad hoc. There is no guarantee of lifeline supply, and much of the subsidy is aimed at the rich and middle class.
- Water quality is a big unknown, but it is widely believed to be below the appropriate levels for healthy human use.
- Re-use of treated water is minimal.

Water

+ HOPEFUL SIGNS

- The latest phase of Cauvery water supply has provided a welcome boost. This is the right time to put an effective water conservation strategy in place.
- BWSSB, which had refused to accept its responsibility for water supply in the CMC areas of the city, is now putting up the water supply network for some of these areas.
- Thanks to litigation by private citizens, the High Court is now over-seeing the restoration and revival of some lakes in the city.
- There has been some recent upward revision of water tariff, although this has been done selectively.
- The BDA and BBMP appear to be slightly more serious about requiring large developers to put in place water conservation and re-use technologies in their projects.

Water

X NOT GOOD ENOUGH

- Extraction and sale of ground water by unauthorised bore-wells is rampant. This water needs to be brought under the management of BWSSB, but the political will is lacking.
- Apart from expressing alarm at the prospect of running out of water in the coming years, the government has not formulated a plan to keep Bangalore water-secure in the future.
- BWSSB lacks hydro-geologists, conservation experts, communication experts, and others needed to be effective. The Board functions as little more than an engineering and distribution company.
- The Pollution Control Board needs to measure and maintain records of water quality, and communicate the risks of contaminated water to citizens.
- Although the Urban Development Policy promised the establishment of a regulator for urban services (including water), this has not happened yet.
- A lifeline water program needs to be created, to ensure a minimum supply of quality water to all citizens.