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City sewage to irrigate 25,000 hectare land

Umesh Isalkar, TNN 4 November 2009, 05:04am IST

PUNE: The untreated sewage generated within the corporation limits of Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad has finally found its use. Titled 'Purandar lift irrigation scheme', the ambitious Rs 250-crore project aims to lift 875 mld (million litre per day) of liquid waste from Mula, Mutha and Pavana rivers to irrigate 25,000 hectare land in the drought-prone areas of Purandar, Baramati and Daund talukas for at least 160 days a year.

The Water Resource Department of the state government along with Krishna Khore Development Board has sanctioned Rs 250 crore for the project, which is 80 per cent complete and is likely to become completely operational by June 2010. Currently, 10,000 hectare land is being provided treated water from the three rivers.

"Farmers in the drought-prone areas of Purandar, Baramati and Daund are deprived of irrigation facility, which has resulted in several agitations. Hence, the idea to reuse liquid effluents was given a thought," said Avinash Surve, superintending engineer of Pune irrigation circle.

The work on installing pumps, construction of intake wells and laying pipelines has been completed at an estimated cost of Rs 200 crore. The project has an additional provision of Rs 50 crore, added Surve. The work on the lift irrigation scheme of liquid waste was taken up in 1999. However, for various reasons, the work did not progress, he added.

"Over 650 mld of sewage is generated in PMC and PCMC areas. A partial amount of which gets treated through sewage treatment plants (STP), but the rest eventually runs into rivers resulting in river pollution. The project will utilise this liquid waste for farming purposes," said P K Mirashe, regional officer of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB).

The objective of every lift irrigation schemes is to provide water to fields located at higher altitude. At some places, water can't be provided to the fields as the level of the field is higher than the source of water. In this case water is required to be lifted at a convenient higher spot from which it can be supplied to the fields under command, said Sharad Dabhadkar, executive engineer of minor irrigation department of Pune division.

"In such schemes, the most important and yet the most neglected portion is distribution of water. But this aspect has been meticulously addressed in Purandar lift irrigation scheme. The whole water lifted is being used through pipe distribution system which delivers equal quantity of water at all the outlets at the same time. This is the state-of-art-technology used for the scheme. Pune city uses almost 13 tmc of water and PCMC uses five tmc of water. This water after use for domestic

purposes gets regenerated as an effluent which is partially treated by the PMC and PCMC," said Surve.