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## **BMC plans to supply water to illegal slums**



To stop water theft in slums, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has urged the state government to revise the policy of not granting legal water connections to illegal slums. The BMC's hydraulic department, in a letter approved by Municipal Commissioner Sitaram Kunte, has made a case for supplying water to all slums irrespective of when they came up, citing revenue losses on account of water theft.

The BMC is planning to take up the matter with the urban development department, officials said. At present, the civic administration supplies water to slums that have come up before January 1, 1995, while no water connection is granted to slums that came up after this date.

Of the 4,200 million litres of water that is supplied to the city every day, nearly 700 million litres is unaccounted for, which means it is either lost to leakages or is stolen. The BMC suffers losses worth an average of Rs 400 crore annually due to water theft and illegal connections.

Even if legal connections are not given to residents of slums that came up after 1995, they have been receiving water either by borrowing or stealing from the supply meant for legitimate consumers, said Additional Municipal Commissioner Rajeev Jalota. Legalising all water connections would help the BMC to know the exact water consumption, he added. “A new policy will also help the BMC in better water management and equitable distribution,” said Jalota.

BMC officials said continuous water supply to slumdweller would also reduce punctures and leakages in water mains, which occur due to theft. This would also reduce water contamination.

The BMC supplies over 700 million litres of water daily to a slum population of 65 lakh through 2.3 lakh metered

connections.

Meanwhile, the BMC is also installing new flow meters for equitable distribution of water. The mechanical flow meters also help in determining correct water bills to slums, which were earlier based on guess work and historical records.

While the production and supply cost is Rs 11.37 per 1,000 litres, the BMC supplies water at a subsidised rate of Rs 3.5 per 1000 litres to slumdweller.