

Survey finds water contaminated

NGOs Find 2 Of 53 Samples Potable, Rest Contain Heavy Metals & Pesticides

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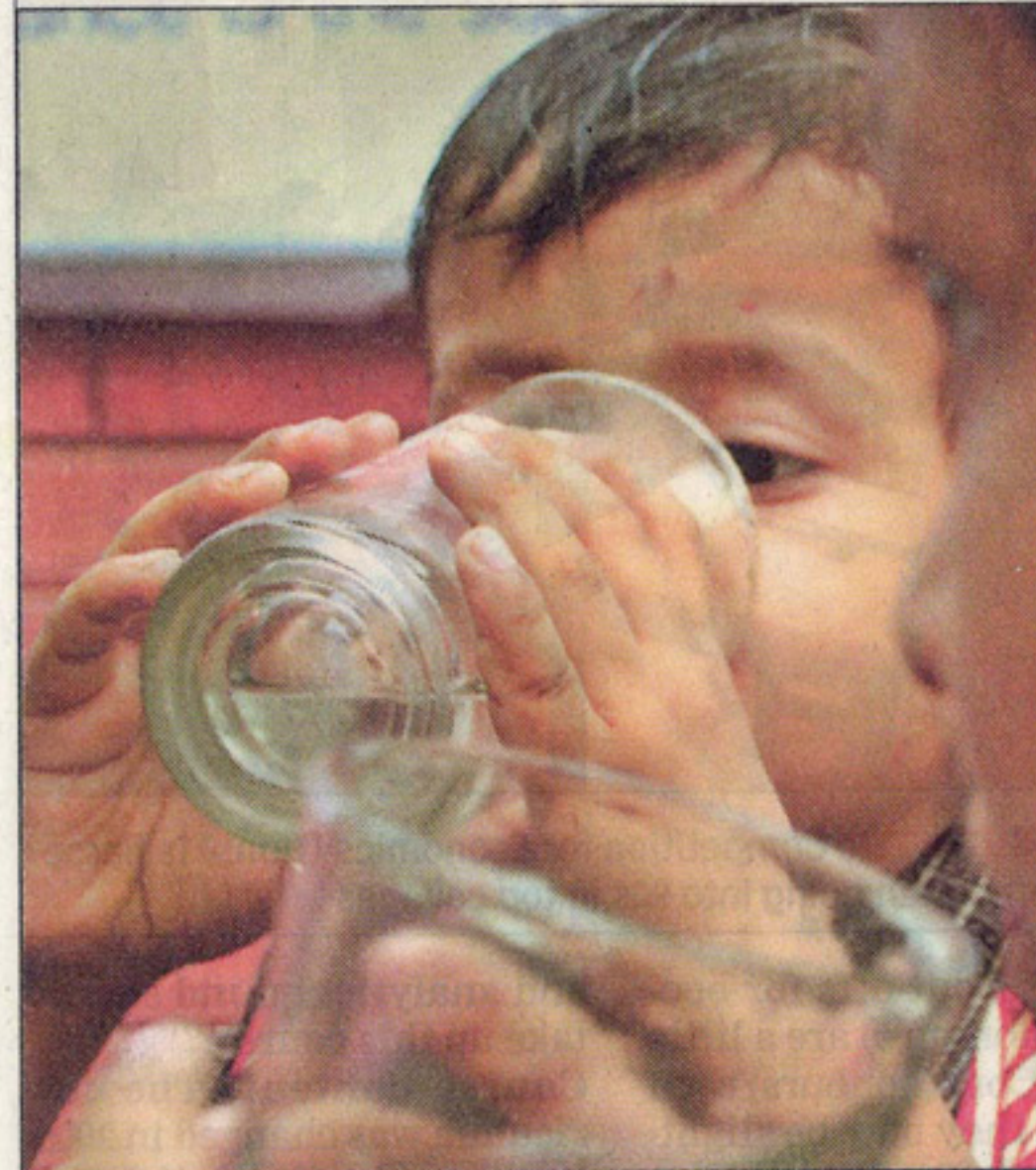
New Delhi: An analysis of Delhi's water, carried out by the NGOs Hazards Centre and Water Aid, has thrown up startling results. Of the 53 samples that were tested, only two were found to be potable. The rest were contaminated in varying degrees with heavy metals, faecal coliform, flouride and even pesticides.

The study, carried out over last year, was made public on Tuesday. Dr Ishaprasad Bhagwat, director, programme operations of Water Aid, told TOI that while the results of the study were quite alarming, this was just an initial report that needed more follow-up action. "The study is indicative of the extent of the problem the city is facing. A lot more work needs to be done. We will submit the study to DJB shortly," he said.

According to Bhagwat, areas from where samples were collected were selected to equally represent fresh and brackish water across all possible depths. From among these, settlements where the working poor live were chosen since they are not equipped with any type of household water-treatment facilities.

The results indicated that the Bhalaswa JJ colony and the Kirby Place dhobi ghat areas had the highest combined levels of contamination. All surface water in all areas surveyed was also found to be contaminated. "The level of chemicals, metals, and biological contaminants was extremely high, indicating that there is little or no access to potable water in the city unless people have the means to purchase treated water from outside

Drink At Your Own Peril



Grossly polluted



► **Flouride contamination**
72% of polluted samples
29% samples from DJB
41% groundwater samples
2% surface water samples

► **Faecal contamination**
72% of polluted samples
27% samples from DJB
39% groundwater samples
6% surface water samples



► **Arsenic contamination**
30% of polluted samples
17% water supplied by DJB
11% groundwater samples
2% surface water samples

sources," said Bhagwat.

Faecal coliform was found not just in pipe water but also in several samples of groundwater, 80% of which is not fit for consumption. Heavy metals were also present in large quantities. Dunu Roy of Hazards Centre pointed out that

DJB's water treatment plants could only treat water under three parameters and were not equipped to handle heavy metals or pesticides. "The deeper you dig, the higher the levels of flouride you find. Since the levels of flouride in the samples we tested are so

high, it only indicates that we have overused our groundwater supply," said Roy.

DJB sources said they have a directorate of quality control which carries out random quality checks on about 300 samples each day. "If the study had such alarming re-

sults, it should have been passed on to us. I don't agree that the situation is as poor as has been indicated by the report since we are strictly following WHO and BIS standards," said Ramesh Negi, CEO, DJB.

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No. of samples: 53

Only two samples were found to be potable

- One from an outlet near the Bhagirathi Water Treatment Plant
- The second potable sample was from a tanker supplying water to Mahavir Vihar in Kanjhawla

Rest of the samples were not fit for drinking. Some areas where contaminated water was found

► DJB piped water supply at the Chandrawal treatment plant	High number of bacteria, arsenic above desirable limit
► DJB piped water supply at New Seelampuri	Faecal coliform, organo-chloro and phosphorous pesticides
► Hand pump at Sonia Vihar, Pushta-1	Faecal coliform, high bacterial colony count, arsenic above desirable limit
► Tanker water at Najafgarh	Fluoride above permissible limit, total iron above permissible limit, lead above desirable limit, organo-chloro and phosphorous pesticides
► DJB piped water supply at the Okhla treatment plant	Fluoride above permissible limit, total iron above permissible limit, faecal coliform, cadmium above desirable limit
► Ranney Well 3 at CWG Village	Fluoride above permissible limit, total iron above permissible limit, faecal coliform, cadmium above desirable limit
► DJB piped water supply at Pankha Road, Uttam Nagar	Fluoride above permissible limit, iron above permissible limit, residual chlorine absent, faecal coliform, high bacterial colony count, cadmium above desirable limit, arsenic above desirable limit
► Tanker water at Bhalaswa JJC	Fluoride above permissible limit, residual chlorine absent, faecal coliform, high bacterial colony count
► DJB piped water supply at Kalander Colony, Dilshad Garden	Fluoride above permissible limit, faecal coliform
► DJB piped water supply at Rajiv Camp 1, Patparganj	Fluoride above permissible limit, faecal coliform, high bacterial colony count, arsenic above desirable limit