

Domestic sewage to blame for 80% of river pollution

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New Delhi: Domestically generated sewage is the main reason for the Yamuna's pollution and contributes to more than 80% of the total effluents being discharged into the river, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has said in reply to an RTI query.

The RTI revealed that DPCC is currently monitoring the Yamuna's quality in nine locations as well as 24 drains, including two coming from UP, that discharge effluents into the river on a monthly basis. It also pointed out the Delhi Jal Board's low sewage treatment capacity, and said over 200 million gallons of sewage reaches the river daily without being treated.

"Delhi's estimated sewage generation is 720 million gallons per day (MGD). The responsibility of proper treatment and disposal of sewage lies with DJB. There are 34 operational sewage treatment plants and about 515 MGD is being treated through these," the RTI reply said.

It added that interceptor sewers have been laid to trap the sewage being discharged through sub-drains, namely Najafgarh drain, the supplementary drain and Shahdara drain.

TOI had earlier reported how untreated sewage is being discharged into the Yamuna which, while entering the city, has dissolved oxygen, biochemical oxygen demand and faecal bacteria levels within the permissible limit. However, by the time the river water exits the capital, it is highly polluted, with faecal coliform (bacteria from excreta) almost 560 times higher than the permissible limit and 2,800 times higher than the desirable limit.

"The question is, after so many years, why has the agency responsible for the Yamuna



DIRTY PICTURE

Times View

It's hardly surprising that domestic sewage is a major polluter of Yamuna. Besides finding out ways and means to reduce it at the source, there's an urgent need to invest in enhancing the capacity of sewage treatment plants. Only then the situation will change for the better.

not even fixed its sewage treatment capacity? Despite sufficient funds, the government has failed to clean the river. We know that the river water is much cleaner when it enters the city and more polluted at exit," said Amit Gupta, a Noida-based RTI activist.

DPCC also said in the RTI that there are 13 common effluent treatment (CET) plants catering to 28 industrial areas and 24 redevelopment areas.

"DPCC regularly monitors the STPs of Delhi Jal Board and the 13 CET plants on a monthly basis. It takes action against industries or units found operating without consent under the Water Act or those which don't meet the prescribed standards for effluent discharge," the RTI reply added.

Of the Yamuna's 48km stretch through NCR, 22km is in the national capital. The river enters at Palla near Wazirpur and exits around Jaitpur. As per DPCC's latest assessment, while it still has dissolved oxygen and less faecal coliform at entry point, it is in a much worse condition at exit.