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24x7 drinking water supply a distant dream in Ballari

The hopes of people of getting 24x7 drinking water supply has remained a distant dream. For, the work, which was taken up in January 2015 and was expected to be completed in July 2017, is still making slow progress.

The work was taken up under the North Karnataka Urban Sector Improvement Project (NKUSIP) at an estimated cost of Rs. 136 crore — Rs. 68.77 crore for the project and Rs. 67.33 crore for operation, maintenance and management services for a period of five years. The agreement was to relay 280.5 km pipeline for internal distribution, installation of meters, construction of new overhead tanks wherever necessary and providing connectivity to existing overhead tanks, covering all the 35 wards. Subsequently, keeping in view the growth of the city and also the population, the agreement was revised to lay 464.58 km pipeline leading to an increase in cost by Rs. 21.78 crore.

Though the city had huge impounding reservoirs with adequate source of water (Tungabhadra canals), the supply of drinking water has been very erratic. This was attributed to the

age-old internal distribution pipelines and to overcome this, the new project was proposed.

Accordingly, the executing agency procured material and laid pipelines covering 312 km and conducted hydro test for about 250 km. Service connection was given to 24,000 houses as against 44,955 houses. At present, there are 69,159 house connections in the city.

But the progress of work has been very slow forcing the city corporation to issue notices and also extend the time to complete the works by April 2018.

But NPML Infra Ltd., which is executing the work, has failed to respond to the notices, though liquidity damage of Rs. 1.24 crore has been levied.

“To ensure that the work was completed, the agency was given one more extension of time till December 2018 but to no avail. Taking a serious view of the laxity on the part of the agency, the general body of the city corporation has decided to blacklist the agency and invite fresh tenders for completing

the works,” sources have told *The Hindu* .