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Shortage of workers hits mosquito-control work

With the monsoon comes the problem of water stagnation and that leads to mosquitoes breeding in fresh stagnant water. This is not uncommon in this time of the year as can be seen from the Coimbatore Corporation's special drive in pockets it considers dengue-prone.

The Corporation has deputed its conservancy workers and engaged a few contract workers to conduct the special drive, which involves door-to-door destruction of mosquito breeding sources like emptying water storage containers, destroying coconut shells and cleaning unused tyres, use of chemicals that prevent mosquito breeding and education of residents on how to control mosquito breeding.

In educating the public the Corporation has also engaged Corporation and State Government school students, who accompany the Corporation teams in the special drive.

But sources in the health wing of the Corporation say that it is only an ad hoc measure and that what ought to be done regularly to control and eradicate mosquitoes is not being done because of staff shortage.

Until recently, the Corporation had field assistants and supervisors who exclusively carried on the mosquito control work. But in their absence because of retirement and replacements, the burden of the task fell on conservancy workers, sanitary inspectors and supervisors, who began doing the job after attending to solid waste management work, cleaning roads and then drains.

The source reduction and other mosquito control-related work fell on the conservancy workers, who are already stretched, the sources say, adding that they are finding it difficult to meet the targets given to them under the mosquito control micro plan.

The plan details the streets the workers have to cover on all the days of the week to do mosquito control work.

The sources admit that the workers are able to meet only 50

per cent of their target.

The Corporation recently augmented the conservancy workers' strength by taking workers on contract. It also extended the contract period of workers till hiring fresh contractors.