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Low capacity chokes drains

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Chennai, Nov. 2: Officials of Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) have always been 'enterprising' in project application.

The most recent venture they have undertaken is the inclusion of urban local bodies adjoining the metropolis into their sewage net, unmindful that they are already choking.

Even as Metro Water experts struggle to avoid the recurring sewer blocks and overflow in the city and suburbs, works are afoot to develop underground drainage system in Avadi, Ambattur, Tiruvotriyur, Maduravoyil, Madhavaram, Tirumalisai, Ullagaram and Puzhithivakkam municipalities and network them with the board's existing system.

Some CMWSSB engineers complained that these additions would only worsen the situation here, as seldom a new treatment plant is developed to accommodate the new additions.

The existing plants at Kodungayur, Villivakkam, Koyambedu, Nesapakkam and Perungudi have a joint treatment capacity of 486 mld (million litres per day). Though the board claims that CCRCP (Chennai city river conservation project) had helped increase capacity to 486 mld, against the earlier 222 mld, flawed techniques had made the city vulnerable to frequent sewage overflow and reckless discharge into the Buckingham Canal and Cooum river among other waterways.

Construction of a new 6 mld treatment plant at Navalur, on Rajiv Gandhi Salai, to cater to the needs of the IT corridor is on the cards. However, no plant has been planned to accommodate the local bodies' addition, Metrowater sources told this paper.

Though the implementation of the proposed UGD in the adjoining local bodies would be a gift in the offing for the taxpayers there, the plans would not serve the purpose until the treatment capacity is increased, the experts observed.