



BLOG /

Restoring Indore's Lakes to Create an Emergency Water Supply

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Sewer water full of solid waste from neighboring houses flows directly into Lasuriya Mori Lake. Photo credit: Gitika Saksena for [Robin Wyatt Vision](#))

“ Our first step was to engage the local community to gauge the importance of the lakes in their daily lives... They told us that the lakes were a large part of their livelihoods, so we started to work with them to restore them.” ”

Sunil Kumar Garg has been an officer with the Indore Municipal Corporation for years. He has seen Indore grow and

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from the Narmada River, 70 kilometers away. Rising temperatures, with recent highs reaching almost 50°C (122°F), exacerbate the pressures on the city.

With Indore facing these challenges, there have been concerted efforts to connect leadership across the city to implement solutions that will build resilience against the impacts of climate change. Megha Burvey of [TARU Leading Edge](#), the local partner of the [Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network \(ACCCRN\)](#) supported by The Rockefeller Foundation, explains that climate change is an issue that forces practitioners like her to work with all stakeholders in every sector.

“Climate change is not something we can look past anymore. The urban sector has been neglected for many years, but now it is getting attention, and we’ve realized how vulnerable we are to

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The mayor of Indore sees the importance of initiating action to strengthen the resilience of the city to climate change impacts. “TARU submitted a report on climate change to our administration four years ago,” says Shri Krishnamurari Moghe, the city’s mayor. “It emphasized the potential negative impact on the environment, temperatures, city infrastructure, and water supply if proactive interventions were not taken.” If not for this report, he feels that awareness of changing climatic conditions may never have made headway within the government.

Starting with a comprehensive analysis of the community needs and existing infrastructure, Megha and her team realized the starkness of the current water situation. Much of the city’s solid waste was ending up in surrounding water bodies, and through GIS mapping and a water quality survey, they were able to identify 15 local lakes where the need for intervention was critical.

Out of the 15 lakes, plans to restore two—Khajrana Lake and Lasuriya Mori Lake—is underway. A plant that treats sewage water at Indore Zoo from the Khan River has also been piloted. Another larger plant has been sanctioned to control solid waste and treat sewage water flowing into Khajrana Lake and with the support of the Mayor’s Office, the project has received all the required clearances and is being expedited.

The treated water will eventually be used for city low-end uses, such as gardening, tree plantations, construction, and so on, thereby preserving vital freshwater sources. These lakes could also soon serve as emergency water sources for the city, while at the same time providing livelihood opportunities for nearby communities.

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“Our first step was to engage the local community to gauge the importance of the lakes in their daily lives. Without their participation we can’t keep them clean, as they might continue to dump waste there,” says Narendra Tomar, a city engineer from the Indore Municipal Corporation. “They told us that the lakes were a large part of their livelihoods, so we started to work with them to restore them.”

Sunil Bhola, from a local self-help group called Saraswati who lives at Lasuriya Mori Lake, recalls how the whole lake used to be choked with rubbish.

“We collaborated with TARU to clean up the water and plot nutrient regeneration to increase oxygen levels. The effort is already yielding results in the form of increased fish catches.” He adds, “If we can keep the lake clean, the fish will continue to flourish, and we’ll be able to generate extra income.”

After the successful restoration of these lakes, the Indore Municipal Corporation intends to conserve four more, and the Indore Development Authority has plans to develop a further two, Tigriya Badshah Lake and Pipliyahana Lake.

“I believe that with the right awareness among communities and proactive interventions, impactful change can be brought about in Indore,” says the mayor. “We are already seeing a difference. Working together across sectors, we will scale up to meet our challenges.”

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