The Water Bill

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or obtains it from the IIIT in-house borewells. Students are charged the same amount irrespective of how the water is procured. GHMC water undergoes proper treatment which ensures it is potable, and transports it too. Borewell water is not purified.

The ratio in which we get ground water and borewell water is not known. However, according to SAC, some of the academic buildings' drinking water areas directly get GHMC water. The rest of the GHMC water is mixed with the borewell water in an underground reservoir and sent to all the buildings. Some buildings have water treatment plants before the water is pumped up. All the drinking water points have RO purifiers, so it doesn't matter which water is pumped there.

Students paid Rs. 120 per kilo liter, based on the consumption in the meter reading of their respective hostels. This was not the case in the past, where there was a flat pricing for every student per month. The students

questioned why the water was priced close to the GHMC water price when we did not completely receive GHMC water.

According to an email sent to the Parliament as a response to students' questions, the Director stated that the 120 INR / KL that was being charged was defined irrespective of any available calculations, and that the difference will be used to plan for the future.¹

On being asked why the charge for borewell water was nearly as much as that for GHMC, the reasoning given was to preserve water, to conserve it and to plan for future. In the Director's words:

"The decision to charge bore water at the same rate as the Manjeera water was take a couple of years ago in a conscious manner. The objective —as explained then was to promote responsible use of water. Ground water is not forever at all and it should not be seen as

2

Ping! July 2019

¹The email containing the minutes of the meeting: https://tinyurl.com/ping-water-bill

S.No	Location	Bore Motor Capacity	No Of Working Hours	Units	Sump Motor Capacity	No Of Warki He	Total Units	Rate per Unit Rs	Total Power Charge Rs	E- 1	Water Pumping harge per KLD
1	ОВН	7.5HP	12 Hrs	67	5.0HP				Charge		24 Per KL
2	NBH	7.5 HP	6Hrs	30	10.0HP				!	\rightarrow	00Per KL
3	WH	7.5 HP	3 Hrs	15	7.5 HP			1			O Per K
4	GH	5.0 HP	12 Hrs	45	7.5 HP	-		1	502	56)OPer K
5	BAKUL	6.0 HP	8 Hrs	34	5.0 HF	30	97	10	582		.63DKL
-						60	90	10	675	37	91.00
						34	49	10	490	15	
	WATER PUMPING					5	90	10	900		7
Borewell to UG Sump, UG Sump to OHT'S (Electricity Char.)						ar,	49	10	490		
	Man nowe	r (Pumping O	perators)			7			1		
2	Wan powe	f OHT'S and U	G Sumps					-			
3	Cleaning o	mps, Motors,	Clushing of	Bores)					TOT		

"free water". We will be doing a disservice to the future residents if we do so, resulting in depleting ground water too soon in this part of the world. We didn't have a proper formula to "cost" this aspect and went with the rate that we pay for external water. I hope you appreciate it as it is a matter also of principle. We are working towards reducing the water requirements by recycling the grey water, having a treatment plant, etc. The wise thing will be to use the difference in today's perceived costs to building such infrastructure. The plans are very much in progress."

Various Costs claimed

On 19th July, the engineering department handed out a sheet as justification for the charges. However several students pointed out that this sheet had errors, some very blatant like 97*10=582. It was also claimed at one point that the high charge was due to the maintenance team.

Water Surcharge

IIIT charges students a certain fixed amount which is to be collected and used for future projects. These are called surcharges. Students in IIIT pay an electricity surcharge, which was used to replace tube lights with LED lights and to replace fans with more environment friendly fans. However, students also used to pay a water surcharge, despite the fact that the high water bill was being justified as something that took future projects into account.

Like the electricity surcharge, the students were unaware that an extra water surcharge is paid too.

This surcharge used to be 100 INR, but was later removed after students questioned the institute about why a surcharge existed in addition to the water bill. The fact that money is being collected for future projects is not wrong, and in fact, should be encouraged if the projects

are realistic and environment friendly. However, students were not informed about either the electricity surcharge or the water surcharge.

Status Quo

Five student representatives comprising of parliament members as well as hostel representatives had meetings with the SAC and other concerned officials regarding the discrepancies throughout the monsoon semester.

According to an update in the PHASE 1 report of the student parliament:

a. The issue got resolved with the introduction of a new water policy. From August-2018 (Monsoon 2018), each student has to pay 250 rupees per month. This will be included as a component in the hostel rent from next semester.

b. For Kadamb and Parijaat where high irregularities were observed, the residents of these hostels will get refunds or adjustments in the next semester's fee. The consumption for the last 2 semesters will be based on the last 3 months' usage which is around 3 KL/month/student.

According to Minesh Mathew, one of the student representatives, it was also agreed that a meeting would be held every year to look into the need for revising the prices. The last meeting was held in November, 2018.

In January, students of residing in Parijaat and Kadamb received an email that a refund process would be initiated for those who paid an excess amount in the water bill.