PRAJA REPORT 2023-24

'Mumbai's air, water quality getting better'

Latest report by foundation finds air quality levels returning to pre-pandemic good levels, while just 1% of water samples in 21 of 24 wards fail tests



showed an improvement in 2024 compared to 2020. REPRESENTATION PIC/ISTOCK

RITIKA GONDHALEKAR AND MADHULIKA RAM KAVATTUR

THE city has seen eight straight months of satisfactory/good air quality last year, the winter nonths which usually see a rise in air quality have also been seen with lower levels than last year, according to the latest Pra year, according to the latest Pra-ia Foundation report, released yesterday. As for the city's wa-ter, only 107 samples (0.33 per cent) out of the 32,877 tested across the city's 25 wards were declared unfit for consumption last year. **PO3



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Water quality better, vet rise in diseases

Rise in diseases despite 'better' water supply: experts blame poor testing, patchy supply leaving slum residents dry and disease-hit

RITIKA GONDHALEKAR

WATER quality in the city has shown improvement in 2024 compared to 2020 according to a recent report released by Praja Foundation on Mum-bai's civic and environmental issues. Only 107 samples out of the 32.877 tested across the city's 25 wards were declared unfit for consumption last year. However, complaints registered in the Centralised Complaint Registration Sys-tem (CCRS) rose from 1369 in 2020 to 2083 in 2024.

2020 to 2083 in 2024.
Suprisingly, despite this, the city has witnessed a sharp rise in diarrhoea and cholera cases (both water borne diseases) in 2023 compared to 2019, As per the report, diarrhoea cases increased by 19 per cent, from 93,671 in 2019 to 11,1928 in 2023, while cholera cases rose by a staggering 114 per cent, from 11 to 114 during the same period.
This has raised a key question: Why are waterborne distoned.

tion: Why are waterborne dis-ease cases increasing despite improved water quality? And why are more people complaining about water issues?
"Raising the same concerns,
we recommend that the BMC

collect more water samples, collect more water samples, especially from areas with higher instances of contamination, to understand what is causing people to fall ill. So far, only 32,877 samples have been collected across 25 wards throughout the year. That's around 1316 samples per ward around 1316 samples per ward to ground the country of the people was the sample of the people was the sample of the people of the peo annually, or roughly 109 sam-ples per ward per month. This level of sampling is clearly insufficient, considering the rising diarrhoea and cholera cases citywide," said Mahesh Bhaskar, research associate at Praia Foundation.

Slum households often depend on expensive private water tankers paying ₹729 per month compared to ₹28.62 for metered users

Ward-wise performance

The D Ward, which includes areas like Grant Road, Tar-deo, Malabar Hill, Nagpada, Gamdevi, and VP Road, did Gamdevi, and VP Road, did not report a single case of di-arrhoea or typhoid in 2023. On the other hand, Gysouth Ward, comprising Worli, Prabhadevi, Mahalaxmi, and Lower Parel, reported the highest number of diarrhoea cases (7839). K/ East Ward, which includes Andheri East, Vile Parle East, and Jogeshwari East, recorded the highest number of typhoid cases (359) among all wards. cases (359) among all wards.

Possible reason

Mumbai's water supply sys-tem suffers from significant disparities in distribution. The city receives 4370 MLD of The city receives 4370 MLD of water daily, but due to pipeline losses, only 3975 MLD reaches consumers. Although Mumbai's per capita water supply exceeds national norms, as prescribed by the Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation (IIBPEII) suitelines.

tation (URDPFI) guidelines, the distribution is uneven. Residents in slum areas receive only around 45 litres per person per day, while non-slum areas get 135 litres. Slum households often depend on expensive private water tankers, paying ₹729 per month compared to ₹28.62 for me-tered users. Only 8 per cent of the city receives a 24x7 water supply; the average is just 5.37

hours per day.

Of the total water supply-re-lated complaints, 59 per cent were about shortages and con-tamination (6436 and 2083, re-spectively, out of 14,522). These issues mirror the health data, which logged over 1.1 lakh di-arrhoea cases in 2023. Uneven metering and the underutilisation of the water

department's capital expendi-ture, only 69 per cent of R5058 crore was spent in 2023–24, re-flect serious gaps in planning and accountability. "This has ultimately impacted public health," said Milind Mhaske, CEO. Praia Foundation

Mumbai's water supply system suffers from significant disparities in distribution. REPRESENTATION PIC/ISTOCK



According to Praja Foundation, the average AQI in 2024 stood at 87. PIC/

KEY FINDINGS &
RECOMMENDATIONS

ork: 2024 proves

ental efforts

that long-term environmental

Pollution is still

Data is vital:

deadly: Even when AQI improves, health impacts linger.

Real-time AQI and mortality tracking

must guide targeted public health action

Infrastructure needs

syncing: Health services should

align with pollution patterns, especially in high-risk winter

Deaths

chronic

pulmonary

respiratory

remained

causes.

the leading

illnesses

from

can pay off.

AQI VS RESPIRATORY DEATHS

Between 2019 and 2022, Mumbai's AQI steadily worsened, from 92 in 2019 to 125 in 2022. This period also saw persistently high deaths from respiratory illnesses, including:

Over 4000 annual deaths from lower respiratory diseases.

Continued threats from respiratory tuberculosis and neoplasms. While 2023 saw a slight dip in AQI to

108, no month registered "Good" air quality (AQI <50), underlining how severe the pollution problem had



BUT WHAT ABOUT DEATHS?

While respiratory death data for 2023 and 2024 is incomplete trends from prior years suggest a consistent correlation between high AOI and mortality:

13,266 respiratory reported in 2019, dropping to 11,209 in 2022, but still an alarming figure.

If the 2024 AQI improvements hold, experts expect a future decline in these mortality figures. pending confirmation from public health data.

2024: A TURNING POINT

The year 2024 marked a sharp improvement:

January and February, usually the most polluted months, showed improved AQIs of 114 and 119, respectively.

Summer months (June to August) recorded cleanest air in five years, with AQIs in the 40s.

suggests that pollution control

policies, public awareness, and even behavioural shifts from the pandemic era, like reduced vehicular movement and slowed industrial activity, have had a lasting impact," the report notes.

wever, Praja Foundation pointed out that the positioning of monitoring stations affects accuracy. "Stations should be ced near landfills, STPs, and industrial areas to accurately lect poor air zones, and closer to gardens or coastlines reflect cleaner zones," said Shreyas Chorgi, manager –

Breath of fresh air? AQI drops to five-year low, but respiratory deaths still cast a shadow on Mumbai's improving skies

MADHULIKA RAM KAVATTUR mailbag@mid-day.com

AFTER years of worsening air, Mumbai is finally breathing a Mumbai is finally breathing a little easier. The city's air qual-ity is returning to pre-pan-demic levels, according to the latest Praja Foundation report for 2023-24. It highlights that while air quality had sharply deteriorated post-pandemic, 2024 marks a turnaround, with multiple months registering 'Good' air quality for the first

Good air quality for the first time in years.
Traditionally, the winter months see AQI (Air Quality Index) levels spike, but in 2024, they have remained relatively moderate, hinting at broader improvements across the city. From 2019 to 2024, Mumbai's battle with pollution has been a mix of slow progress and continuing health risks.

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According to Praja Foundation, the average AQI in 2024 stood at 87, placing it

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in the 'moderate' zone and showing an improvement over showing an improvement over 2019's average AQI of 92. The city, also experienced eight consecutive months of 'sat-isfactory' or 'good' ar quali-ty. Even the winter months, which typically see the worst pollution, recorded lower levels than in previous years.

While data was incomplete while data was incomplete for western suburbs, the east-ern suburbs recorded the best air, with the island city stay-ing in the moderate range. Wind and rainfall from April

Wind and rainfall from April to August helped improve air quality, with August recording the lowest average AQl at 40. December was the worst, peaking at 143.

The report recommends installing AQI monitoring stations, ward-wise, for more accurate data. It also urges better coordination between CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board) and SAFAR (Systol 1985). trol Board) and SAFAR (Sys tem of Air Quality, Weather Forecasting, and Research) to create a unified air quality reporting system.

