

# C-section costs more in drought-hit Latur

Many surgeries being postponed due to shortfall of water, only emergency cases being taken up

**ANURADHA MASCARENHAS**  
PUNE, APRIL 11

DR AHTESHAM Shaikh, who is studying a postgraduate diploma in emergency medicine at Jehangir hospital, had to rush to his native place at Latur city which is in the grip of a severe drought and has had no water for the last two months.

"My father is a general practitioner there and has a clinic. While the situation is grim, there has not been a rise in cases of dehydration or gastroenteritis. Planned surgeries, however, have been deferred," Dr Shaikh told Newline.

Since February, there has been no water at Latur and over 150 small and large hospitals have been purchasing water from tankers. "Our locality has a borewell that supplies water to 8-10 households but we don't know how long it will last," Shaikh said.

At the 20-bed Lokmanya intensive care centre, director Dr Chetan Sarda, who has been a former municipal corporator, told Newline that because of the water scarcity, the hospitals have to



Since February, there has been no water in Latur and over 150 hospitals have been purchasing water from tankers

purchase water tankers of 6,000 litres every alternate day, which cost between Rs 800-1,000.

"Planned deliveries via C-section now cost Rs 25,000 as doctors have to use more water and hence are charging a little extra," claims Dr Sarda. Most of the big hospitals have deferred planned

surgeries and taking up emergency ones, he said.

At the government medical college in Latur, Dean Dr Ashok Shinde said that their daily requirement is 1.90 lakh litres and they are falling short by 40,000 litres. "However, at the government hospital, we are taking up

35 routine and 25 emergency operations everyday," he said.

Dr VM Kulkarni, Deputy Director, Latur division, said that the situation in Latur city is bleak as compared to others. The Latur division comprises the four districts of Latur, Beed, Osmanabad and Nanded. In Latur city, the borewell at the 60-bed women's hospital has dried up, but several charitable and social organisations are helping in providing water tankers, Kulkarni said.

Indian Medical Association Latur unit chief Dr R Londhe said that they have taken up a campaign to reach out to the interior areas of Latur district and treat people affected by water shortage. Dr Mahesh Patil, Medical Officer of Health, Latur municipal corporation, however, said that no surgeries have been cancelled. "We are keeping watch on any outbreak of diseases, but there has been none so far," he said.

## Health dept rules out outbreak of water-borne diseases

A sanitary survey last year had issued red cards to 800 vil-

lages whose water sources were at risk for contamination. In the wake of severe drought, the health department has now turned its focus on these villages. "There is, however, no drastic rise in gastro, cholera or other waterborne disease," Dr Kanchan Jagtap, Joint Director of Health, said. Special arrangements are being made to ensure that water in the tankers are clean. Bleaching powder is being given to both tanker drivers and water cleaners so as to prevent any outbreak, Dr Pradip Awate, state surveillance officer, said.

## GIPE team to tour drought-hit districts to assess damage

City based Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) will send a team to the worst drought affected districts of Beed, Osmanabad and Latur to assess the ground reality. "This is our initiative and we will submit a report to the government as the trend of migration from drought-affected areas to other places like Pune, Mumbai and others continues," Dr Rajas Parchure, Director, GIPE, said.