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'One toilet for 1,440 people at Dharavi'

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NEW DELHI: A flush toilet may save 60% of the estimated 1.8 million children who die of diarrhoea worldwide each year, says UNDP's Human Development Report 2006, released on Thursday.

In Mumbai's case, the report says, thousands of poor people are simply not counted because they live in informal settlements, but according to the official data, Mumbai enjoys a safe water coverage rate of more than 90%. The report calls the figure "almost certainly exaggerated".

The report estimates almost half of the city's 18 million people live in temporary slums who don't figure in municipal data.

In Dharavi, the report says, "There is an estimated one toilet for every 1,440 people. In the rainy season, streets, lacking drainage, become channels for filthy water carrying human excrement.

|Bride

|Hindu

People in Dharavi rely on wells, tankers or unsafe sources for their drinking water. In a typical case, 15 families share one tap that works for two hours a day."

The report, on the other hand, hails the efforts made by West Bengal in improving toilet facilities. "Consider West Bengal.

Since 1990 the state government has developed a strategy for expanding rural sanitation. It created a dedicated unit responsible for monitoring coverage, conducting reviews and evaluations and providing support and training to local government,"it states.

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