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# WATER HARVESTING

A SMD INITIATIVE

# Catch the water where it falls



erala is a land blessed with monsoons twice a year. The state receives an average annual rainfall of 3000mm, whereas the average annual precipitation of India as a whole is only 1190 mm. On an average, each one hectare of land area in Kerala gets 30 million litres of water as rainfall every year. This means a small plot of 10 cents area receives almost 12-lakh litres of rainwater annually. But all this does not result in the perennial availability of water in the State. The region experiences excessive rainfall and high floods during monsoon months and also suffer from acute shortage of even drinking,

water in many areas due to lack of management. The basic issue underlying the water resources problems, are recurring floods, drainage congestion, soil erosion, human influence on environment and so on and calls for its integrated use for drinking, irrigation, generation of hydropower, navigation, pisciculture, recreation etc. The only way to overcome the problem of drinking water is to harvest the

usually comprises a roof, a storage tank and guttering to transport the water from the roof to the storage tank. In addition, a first flush system to divert the dirty water, which contains roof debris collected on the roof during non-rainy periods and a filter unit to remove debris and contaminants before water enters the storage tank are also provided.

Among the above components,

of structures and drainage networks

Plan integrated soil and water conservation intervention projects with respect to each piece of land considering the topography, sub-surface geography and social and demographical factors. Focus on more rainwater harvesting and  $groundwater\,recharge\,activities\,based\,on\,the\,need$ 

and sustainability. Form vigilant groups to prevent unauthorized sand mining, land conversion and mining.

Promote projects like 'Mazhapolima' (Well recharge) in coordination with projects like 'Haritha Keralam, MGNREGA etc.

Take measures control both point source and non-point source pollutions. Promote 'water literacy' programmes in schools and other educational institutions.

Ensure concerted and coordinated efforts of all line departments, agencies and other institutions pertaining to drought management, watershed development, water management, land use.

Dr Manoj P Samuel,

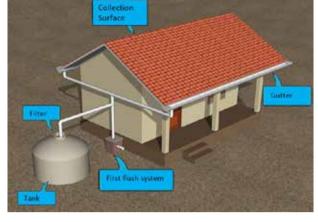
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ക്വാൻസർ പോലുള്ള രോഗങ്ങൾക്ക് പ്ലാസ്റ്റിക്കും ഒരു കാരണം ...! മാറു സ്റ്റെയിൻലെസ്റ്റ് സ്റ്റീലിലേക്ക്...!





A recent study revealed that in India, the depth to the ground water table is increasing by 30 cm per year on an average. Traditional water conservation measures like country ponds, paddy fields, mangrove forests, sacred groves, backwaters etc are slowly getting depleted. Natural water flow networks including first and second order streams, canals, and rivers are getting filled up with slit deposits and urban wastes. Indiscriminate sand mining, point and non-point source pollution including dumping of waste are silent killers for our rivers. The development of water sources must be within the capacity of nature to replenish and to sustain. If this is not done, costly mistakes can occur with serious consequences. We can combat the drought and water scarcity problems up to some extent by adopting ways to conserve the both surface and groundwater resources.

abundant rains.

'Rain Water Harvesting' is considered as a low cost alternative to drought mitigation. The region loses the lion share of the rainwater through runoff. It can be implemented as a viable alternative to conventional water supply considering the fact that any land anywhere can be used to harvest rainwater.

Rainwater harvesting, irrespective of the technology used, essentially means harvesting and storing water in days of abundance, for use in lean days. Storing of rainwater can be done in two ways; (i) storing in an artificial storage and (ii) in the soil media as groundwater. The former is more specifically called roof water harvesting and is rather a temporary measure, focusing on human needs providing immediate relief from drinking water scarcity, while the latter has the potential to provide sustainable relief from water scarcity, addressing the needs of all living classes in nature. The direct rainwater, roof water or runoff can be harvested using eco -friendly low-cost technologies such as uv resistant plastic lined ponds, ferro-cement tanks etc. and used for multiple purposes. The rainwater can be collected in large quantity plastic lined ponds and can be used for irrigation, animal rearing and recreational purposes. Generally big ponds are constructed and subsequently lined with plastic sheets like silpolin, nylon or HDPE. Small quantity of rainwater/roof water can be harvested in closed plastic, ferro-cement or masonry tanks for potable purposes.

storage tank is the most expensive and critical component. Storage tank is used to store the water that is collected from the rooftops. The capacity of the storage tank determines the cost of the system and reliability of the mechanism for assured water supply. A Demand-supply analysis is required while designing water collection tanks. The factors such as amount and frequency of rainfall, runoff coefficient of the collecting surface, number of users, daily requirements and dearth period are important for calculating the size and capacity of the storage tank. All the roof water harvesting systems should be aided with a

filtration system. A three layer filter system with sand, (shell) charcoal and small sized granite stones is preferred. Fibre sieves made up of coir, sisal, hemp fibres may be fixed between the layers filter materials for efficient filtration. Well recharge system can also be designed in a similar fashion so that the filtered roof water can be diverted to a well or pond directly with or without any intermediate storage.

### **Rain Water Collection in** Lined Ponds

The rainwater can be collected in large quantity in plastic lined ponds. Generally big ponds are constructed and subsequently lined with uv resistant, multi -layered, cross-laminated plastic sheets like Silpaulin, HDPE or

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The efficient utilisation and management of available rainwater is the core issue if the cropping intensity and production is to be enhanced. Rainwater harvesting and its recycling through the micro irrigation systems may revolutionize the state agriculture by enhancing the production, productivity and quality of produce.

### **Roof Water Harvesting in** Tanks

Roof water harvesting is a technology used for collecting and storing rainwater from rooftops, mostly in tanks. In domestic Rooftop Rainwater Harvesting Systems, rainwater from the house roof is collected in a storage vessel or tank for use during the periods of scarcity.

Usually these systems are designed to support the drinking and cooking needs of the family at the doorstep. Such a system

Nvlon . The roof water, runoff water (after filtration) or spring water may be diverted to the pond. A large sum of water can be harvested using such ponds, which in turn may be used for irrigation or household purposes. These structures are durable, easy to construct and having less construction and maintenance cost.

Apart from these, runoff can be collected in farm ponds. Normally three types of ponds, viz. embankment type, excavated (dugout) and dugout -cum-embankment type are constructed for collection of excess runoff. Embankment type and dugout-cum-embankment types of ponds are feasible in hilly and undulating topography. Embankment type of ponds are created by constructing a small length of dam across a water course whereas dugout-cum -embankment type of pond can be created by excavating a site surrounded by hillocks from two or three sides and making the embankment from excavated soil on remaining sides.

### Groundwater recharging

The basic principle of groundwater recharge is to reduce the velocity of running water. The water harvesting and conservation measures mainly aim at the control of soil erosion and thereby allowing more of this water this water to get infiltrated into the soil to replenish the ground water storage. A critical element in most soil erosion controls is the prevention of the uncontrolled movement of water across a sloping soil surface.

Recommended Strategies Formulation and implementation of meaningful action plans with peoples' participation by the State government and LSG institutions for the integrated Rain Water Harvesting and Ground Water Recharge

Resource documentation with respect to water and land resources for every local self government body. Geo-tagging



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