

## Resource Conservation through Rainwater Harvesting



Image Source: [www.curioushalt.com](http://www.curioushalt.com)

Water is a cyclic resource which can be used again and again after cleaning. Monsoon rains are already on and now when the rains are here, we have a chance to catch it where it falls! With changing climate, rising cities, and vanishing forests and farmlands, the resource is depleting fast. To make most of the monsoon season, a three-pronged strategy should be implemented to recharge ground water levels and spruce up the green cover. The strategy involves additional plantation, rainwater harvesting units and revival of ponds. Water in any form needs to be saved. It may be blue water (irrigation), green water (rainwater captured by the soil and available for plants) and grey water (polluted water that could be treated and recycled). Blue water frees us from the increasingly unpredictable climate and has been hailed as a pillar of the green revolution. Humble green water is seen as "non-technological", unreliable and vulnerable to climate hazards. Grey water results from our urban folly and frenetic industrial development but also, thanks to waste water treatment technologies, this is a "new" water source that could be reused.

For most of the global population, and farmers, green water is more important than blue water. Rainfall is concentrated in a short rainy season (about three to five months), with a few intensive bursts – it is highly variable, and impossible to forecast. Farmers in arid and semi-arid regions where rain is scarce or unpredictable, or both, can use local solutions to make the most of the green water they get. Farmers can improve green water efficiency before it runs off, and when done successfully this can transform communities.

Rainwater harvesting is essential to feed the world. Agriculture across the world depends on rainfall, so harvesting and conserving rainwater is key to boosting crop yields. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that we need to increase agricultural production by 70% to feed the projected 9 billion people expected on the planet by 2050. But, given the current global food crisis, boosting agricultural production will certainly increase water stress. A large quantity of water is used for irrigation and there is an urgent need for proper water management in irrigation sector. Sprinkler irrigation and drip irrigation can play a crucial role in conserving scarce water resources in dry areas. Drip irrigation and sprinklers can save anywhere between 30 to 60% of water.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/install-rainwater-harvesting-system-ngt-to-delhi-schools-117061800131\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/install-rainwater-harvesting-system-ngt-to-delhi-schools-117061800131_1.html)

Recently, The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed private and government schools in Delhi to submit an action plan on installing rainwater harvesting systems in their premises. The schools are urged to take immediate steps to set up rainwater harvesting systems. The initiative holds importance as hydrologists claim that more than 50% of city's water is extracted from the ground.

After the century's worst drought, people in Kerala are now getting ready to harvest rain in their backyard wells, temple ponds, and lush forests. Citizens, voluntary groups, and the state government are ready with a set of measures. Recycling not only provides water during scarcity but also ensures that the city's dependency on its declining water table is reduced.

Rainwater harvesting is not rocket science but needs a little awareness about conservation of water. We are living in bad times with the lakes around the city drying up and pollution reducing the remaining ones into poison pools, the water crisis is a major issue in all cities. Civic body should visit areas across the city for identifying potential rainwater harvesting pits and making them operational prior to the arrival of monsoon. If corrective action is not initiated, then the city's underground water table can run dry in a few decades. Local bodies should be urged to use various schemes launched by government such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme, which ensures 100 days of work to every poor rural household, to build check dams and clean canals and ponds. Schools, colleges, residential and commercial complexes, local self-help groups and local governance institutions should be urged to contribute to conserving water in the countless ponds and wells, and save rivers, canals, and lagoons. Every citizen should try and harvest as much as rain water as possible. Consequently it will ease the pressure on our natural water resources.

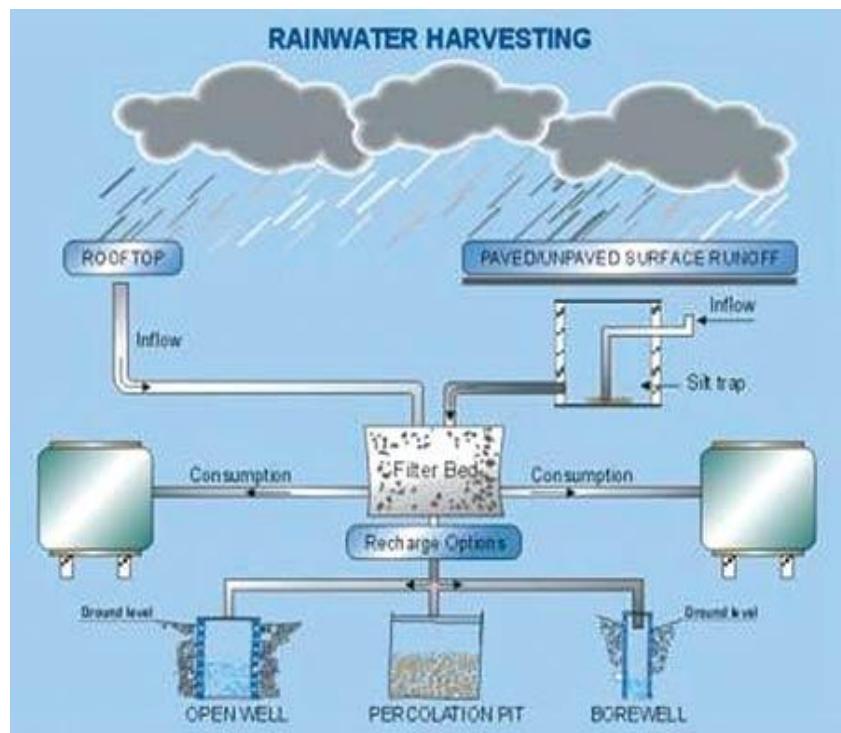


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