

# Rains have arrived. Why do we keep neglecting rain water harvesting?

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**M**uch awaited rains are here. Obviously, everybody is in a mood to celebrate the smile of lord Indra. But then, will we deal with the rainwater any different this year? Will say, 50% ( if not 100% ) water be conserved where it falls in all schools, colleges, public and private institutions, offices, housing societies, bungalows of ministers and civic authorities, NGOs and industry leaders? Why would drainage of rain water into nullahs be so tolerable for the elite, which feels disturbed often on small issues.

Let me tell you a story. May be it offers a clue why we are so complacent? There was a Zen teacher a few thousand years ago, when there was no shortage of water at all. One day, he asked one of his disciples to fetch a glass of water. The student went and brought it. The teacher took the glass, drank it and gave the empty glass back to the student. The student went to the kitchen to keep the empty glass back. On the way,

## **MINDS ON THE MARGIN**



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he just jerked the glass to empty it if a few drops that were still there in the glass.

The teacher called him and asked what did he do? The student was flummoxed. He wondered what happened. He said, "You asked me to bring a glass of water, I went and brought it to you. You took the water. I took away the empty glass to the kitchen. That is all".

The teacher smiled and asked him again to reflect on what exactly he did do. After a few attempts, suddenly the eyes of the student lit up. He

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said, "I now recall that I had thrown a drop of water from the glass". The teacher asked him to refocus on the word, 'just' and the student got his Zen on that realisation.

A few thousands years ago when there was no shortage of water, we had this kind of consciousness. What has happened to our sanskar today? I have written on this subject several times. I am sure, I am not saying anything new at all. The crisis of water is looming large on the horizon. How is it that responsible institutions and individuals are not taking enough steps in this regard?

May be young students must ask their parents the answer to this question. They should ask the principle of schools and colleges, elderly neighbours, relatives, friends and even the strangers on the road. Once, we all start asking ourselves the answer to the question about our apathy, may be a few hearts will be stirred. I still recall Champai in Mizoram which I consider as water harvesting capital of India.

Every single house there had roof top water structure, no matter how small. Can't we do it too? May be municipal corporation and AUDA will not give permission to use any building unless water recycle, reuse and harvesting plans are submitted by every single user of water in the city or even villages and small towns. Certain kinds of actions require coercion. After all, optimal coercion, as someone said, is not zero.