

Water supply from the bottom up

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Water supply from the bottom up

Rainbow Drive, an apartment complex of 200 houses seems to be all that the name suggests -- tree-lined pathways, moist breezes

Rainbow Drive was beginning to go the way of all 'dry' colonies just four months ago. It does not have a water supply connecti

According to a resident, Jayawanth Bhardwaj, formerly software engineer with Microsoft, but now involved mostly in community p

A rain barrel in one of the homes at Rainbow Drive, Sarjapur Road. Pic: Rainwater Club (RWC).

Four months ago, there were just two borewells in use for 200 houses, he explains. Half the colony used one well, while the ot

Today, though, things are different. In just three months, the apartment complex has turned around. Seven public (open) wells

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[Club](#).

Rainbow catching rain

The transformation began with the Rainwater Club (RWC) meeting people at the Rainbow Drive in March 2008. RWC is a group of de

According to Avinash Krishnamurthy, for RWC who worked on the project with Bhardwaj, layouts in Bangalore typically have 55 to

For each of the 20 houses at Rainbow Drive, custom rainwater harvesting solutions - involving rooftop harvesting, private rech

Rainbow Drive represents perhaps the fastest implementation of RWH projects on such a scale, says Krishnamurthy. It is also pr

Of course, in just three months, the effects of recharge cannot be felt immediately, especially as it has not been raining too

Rainbow Drive's plan is to distribute a whole set of recharge wells across the layout to replenish ground water, says Krishnam

[How it happened](#)

The turnaround was not immediate, mostly due to the initial reluctance of the people. "Residents believe water is naturally 'g

A recharge well in common storm water drains with filter. Pic: RWC.

Bhardwaj's experience has been that builders are a reluctant lot too. The usual question is posed by them is: "Does RWH really

Seven years ago, there were 70 residences in Rainbow Drive and seven borewells, and a general feeling of luxurious living. Wit

Recalling the creeping realization that something was wrong, Sushil Kumar Nahar, another software engineer and resident here r

Adds K P Singh, another resident and committee member: "We became sure that if have one dry season, then we will have acute sc

A recharge well has been dug, and after the ring is placed properly, a worker is untying the ropes tied to the ring. Pic: Jaya

Krishnamurthy says that the first meeting with Jayawanth took place in February 2008 to explore the possibilities. They discus

The first meeting was held with 32 residents, explaining in simple, non-jargonised terms about the process and price of harves

At the end of the meeting, about 20 were convinced. And once the wheels began to turn, there was no stopping it.

Next, the residents needed convincing that their harvesting techniques were practical, simple and effective. The Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) of Rainbow Drive began the process, the implementation, with the help of the Rainwater Club, took place at two levels. One level was to convince the residents that rainwater harvesting was a practical and effective technique. The team surveyed and installed recharge wells at critical points in the locality. There are three kinds of recharge wells at

A 5ft 30ft recharge well in the common area. Pic: RWC.

One can detect the interesting crisscrossing of recharging wells and pipelines throughout the colony, which is open to public

Water pricing

After implementing phase I of the water harvesting in their layout, Rainbow Drive's next step was to work out pricing.

Rainbow Drive water tariff slabs (Per month)

First 10,000 litres, Rs.10 per KL (Rs.100)

Next 10,000 Rs.15 per KL (Rs.150)

Next 10,000, Rs.25 per KL (Rs.250)

Next 10,000, Rs.40 per KL (Rs.400)

Above this, Rs.60 per KL

The Rainbow Drive residents' welfare association (RWA) runs the water supply system for the layout. The borewells (these are in

Earlier, while the pricing policy put the rates of water at the colony below BWSSB's reference consumer rates, the RWA realised

Moreover, while an average person requires about 135 litres per day, there was higher level of wastage in the homes. "We needed

The residents realised that their pricing policy needed to include an understanding of water as precious resource. They worked

"A fair and balanced pricing policy is crucial, as it is the greatest leveler and control agent," says Bhardwaj. "The RWA is n

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Today, as they look back, they find that their attempts at facing challenges and convincing skeptics have been vindicated, when

There are other benefits too. Manoj explains: "Initially houses near the gates would get clogged. Now it doesn't happen. So we

Meanwhile, the steps that Rainbow Drive has taken have come to symbolise the power of collective action and simple technology.

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