

AKASH GANGA TRUST - RAIN CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2002-2003
(April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003)

1. CREATION OF THE TRUST

Akash Ganga Chennai, an informal group of individuals involved in one way or the other in Rainwater Harvesting (RWH) in Chennai was formed in June, 2001, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Ram Krishnan, a NRI settled in Minneapolis, U.S.A. He was born and brought up in Chennai, India is an alumni of I.I.T. Madras (1967, Mechanical). AGC consisted of the following individuals (in alphabetical order).

Mr. Benjamin Cherian, a Chartered Accountant by education, an exporter by profession, the Past Governor of Dist. 3230 of Rotary and a committed Rainwater Harvester involved in reviving old temple tanks in Chennai.

Mr. K.R.Gopinath, a pioneer in RWH, who was the first among our members to talk about the importance of RWH in Chennai. An industrialist by profession and a RWH consultant executing several RWH projects at present.

Mr. Goutham Ghosh, a journalist by profession, is with The Hindu as its special correspondent. He was the first to write a series of articles on RWH in The Hindu, which has been largely responsible for sensitizing the general public.

Mr. Indukanth Ragade, a Ph.D. in Chemistry was with M/s Alacrity Foundations, a well-known construction company in Chennai as Vice-Chairman. A very committed RWH harvester, he has written a book "Self Reliance in Water" on RWH, Wastewater reuse and water conservation.

Mr. R. Jeyakumar, Managing Director of RajParis Construction Company has been involved as a Rotarian in a few RWH projects in slums.

Mr. M.N. Mitra, an employee of State Bank of Hyderabad has been involved through a public charitable trust called TRY in promoting and implementing RWH in several areas of Chennai.

Prof. S. Mohan, Head Department of Civil Engineering in IIT Madras, has been involved in issues to water, its sources etc for almost two decades and has organized and attended several seminars both in India and abroad.

Mr. Ram Krishnan, a NRI settled in Minneapolis, U.S.A. He was born and brought up in Chennai, India is an alumni of I.I.T. Madras (1967, Mechanical). He gave the initial seed money for setting up the Rain Centre.

Mr. R. Ramani, a RWH enthusiast and facilitator, had implemented RWH in his house more than a decade ago has also been promoting and popularizing RWH in schools and colleges.

Prof. M.V. Satyanarayana, is a physicist and employed in IIT Madras as an Associate Professor, is a keen RWH enthusiast. Has been organizing awareness programmes in schools through poster exhibitions.

Mr. Sekhar Raghavan, a Ph.D. in Physics, has been involved in a door to door campaign in a few areas of Chennai trying to create awareness about the importance of RWH among its residents. Has been associated with the Rain center for the past four years as its Director.

Mr.N.R.Sudarshan, a company executive, is a keen RWH enthusiast.

Mr. V.Varadarajan, holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the U.S.A. and is a financial consultant.

Mr. K.Venkataraman, a keen RWH enthusiast was responsible in creating awareness about RWH in Padmanabha Nagar, where he lives and also helped the residents in implementing RWH.

2. SETTING UP AND INAGURATION OF THE RAIN CENTRE

The Akash Ganga Chennai group felt the need for a house in a central residential locality of Chennai, where the residents can see for themselves, the RWH systems in action and also get necessary information and assistance in its implementation. Hence it was decided to set up a model house called RAIN CENTRE with the sole objective of propagating, promoting and popularizing RWH relevant to urban and semi-urban areas.

As a first step, in order to mobilise funds for creating the Rain Centre, a trust called Akash Ganga Trust was formed in January, 2002 with Mr. Sekhar Raghavan and Mr.N.R.Sudarshan as the first trustees and Mr. V.Varadarajan as a trustee. Our trust derives its name from Akash meaning the sky and Ganga denoting the perennial river Ganges of North India, believed to have descended from the sky - together the name stands for the water received from the sky, viz., rainwater. The trust was registered both with the Registrar of Cooperative Societies of the Tamil Nadu Government as well as with the Income Tax department of the government of India under Sec. 12 A of the I.T.Act. The trust had also obtained exemption under Sec. 80G of the I.T.Act.

The initial seed money of Rs. 3.5 lakhs was received from Ram Krishnan. A portion of an independent house was taken on rent of Rs. 8000 per month at 4, 3rd Trust Link Street, Mandavelipakkam, Chennai 600 028, almost in the center of the city and a residential area to set up the Rain Centre. The Rain Centre, the first in the country is a one-stop information and assistance centre on rainwater harvesting. It so happened that the owner of the house was another NRI, an I.I.T Madras alumni and a person deeply concerned about water and its sustenance called Leo Prakash, settled in Germany. RWH systems were installed in the house to harvest both rooftop and driveway runoff rainwater. Arrangements to simulate rainfall have also been provided in the centre to exhibit rooftop and runoff harvesting.

The Centre for Science and Environment, a New Delhi based NGO involved in Natural Resources Management in a big way came forward to support the centre by providing colourful poster panels both on the importance of water and RWH. Thanks to professor M.S.Swaminathan, the chairperson of CSE, the centre was officially inaugurated by the then Chief Minister of Tamilnadu on 21st August, 2002.

On behalf of the three departments of the Government of Tamil Nadu, namely, Corporation of Chennai, Chennai metropolitan Water supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) and Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD), donations in cash for Rs.1.5 lakhs and a working model costing almost Rs. 50000/= were made

to the centre. Another government department - CMDA also agreed to sponsor the centre and its activities. The trust also received donations of Rs. 2.25 lakhs from the Rotary Club of Madras, Dist. 3230, Rs. 30000/= from Mr. K.R.Gopinath and Rs. 50000/= from Mr. Shankar, Managing Director, Computer Age Management Systems Private Limited.

3. WORKSHOP ON RWH METHODOLOGY FOR PLUMBERS

A half-day workshop for plumbers to educate them about the importance of harvesting as well as the efficiency of different RWH structures, was organized at the Rain Centre on 4.8.02. Fifteen plumbers from various parts of Chennai attended the meeting. Their names were registered with the center and enquiries received by the center from the residents of Chennai for advice and implementation of RWH were assigned to them. This proved to be an income generation activity for the plumbers.

4. BOOK RELEASE FUNCTION

A function was organized at the rain centre by SPRINGZ, a NGO on March 29, 2003 to release an Instruction Manual on Rainwater Harvesting written by Mr. Thillai Govindarajan and Mr. K.R.Sivaraman. The function was attended among others, by Dr. Panchanathan, Chief Engineer, P.W.D.,(rtd.), Prof. A. Vaidyanathan, Prof. Emeritus, MIDS, Mr. Shobnath, Reg.director, CGWB and Mr. Sundarasekaran, Jt.Chief Engineer, P.W.D. Ground water.

5. PUBLICITY IN THE PRINT MEDIA

1. THE WEEK magazine dated 22.05.2002 carried an article about the Centre.
2. The Hindu dated 20.06.2002 and The New Indian express dated 24.06.2002 carried articles about the proposed activities of the Centre .
3. Goutham Ghosh's article about the Centre appeared in The Hindu dated 8.07.2002
4. Mambalam Times and Mylapore Times, two neighbourhood newspapers carried articles about the Centre.
5. The Hindu, The New Indian Express and *Namadu MGR* [tamil daily] dated 22.08.2002 carried reports about the inauguration of the Rain Centre by the Hon'ble Chief Minister.
6. *Ananda Vikatan*, a Tamil weekly magazine dt. carried a report about the Rain Centre and its inauguration
7. *Dina Mani*, a tamil daily in its issues dated 9.09.2002 and 30.09.2002 and The Week dated 15.9.2002 carried articles about the centre and its proposed activities.

6. PARTICIPATION IN EXHIBITIONS

The Rain Centre participated in the following exhibitions, displayed posters on the importance of water and rainwater harvesting and distributed resource material in English and Tamil on RWH and its importance to the visitors.

1. In an exhibition organised by Sankara Vidyashram Higher Sec.school, Thiruvanmiyur on 08.11.2002
2. In “PROPWORLD” an exhibition organised by the Rotary club of Madras for the Building Industry at Raja Muthaiah Hall, Egmore during 10 – 12 .01.2003
3. In an exhibition organised by “Save the Tiger Forum” in Mct.M Chidambaram Chettiar Higher Sec.School, Mylapore 18.01.2003
4. In an exhibition organised by S.Balakrishna Joshi Gurukulam Mat.Higher School, Villivakkam during 30-31.01.2003.
5. In an exhibition organised by Ramakrishna Polytechnic, Thiruvottiyur during 28 .2.2003 to 2 .3.2003.

7. VISITORS TO THE RAIN CENTRE

1. Thirty teachers in charge of NSS activities in Higher Sec. schools from the entire state visited the Centre (organised by Madras school of Social work) on 25.09.2002
2. Mr.Gamini Jayawickrema Perera, Srilankan minister for Irrigation and Water Management and Sumith Nakandala, Dy.High Commissioner, Srilanka visited the Centre on 20.12.2002
3. Fiftyfive NSS students from Madras Veterinary College, visited the Centre. on 6.01.2003
4. Fifty representatives from various NGOs attending a seminar to commemorate the 50th year of Ford Foundation in India visited the Centre (organised by DHAN Foundation) on 6.02.2003.
5. Twenty American and Korean Children from the American International School visited the centre on 12 .03.2003
6. Fifty NSS students from Anna University visited the Centre on 29 .03.2003.

8. PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS WITHIN CHENNAI AND OUTSIDE

1. Made a presentation in the two-day workshop on “Rainwater Harvesting – Issues and Techniques” organised by **INSTRUCT**, Bangalore 14-15 .06. 2002
2. Made a presentation and video film show in the AICTE sponsored one-week “National Workshop on Rainwater Harvesting for polytechnic teachers” organised by Periyar Polytechnic, Vallam, Thanjavur 28 .11. 2002
3. Made a presentation in the Seminar on Rainwater Harvesting organised by CII in Ashok Leyland Management Centre, Hosur 29 .11. 2002
4. Made a presentation in the Workshop on “Rainwater Harvesting for engineering college lecturers from Tamilnadu”, organised by the Civil Engineering Department, Sri Adhiparasakthi college of Engineering, Melmaruvathur 12.12.2002
5. Made a presentation on Rainwater Harvesting in the Inagural function of the Institution of Civil Engineers organized by Jaya College of Engineering, Thiruninravur 4.01.2003
6. Made a presentation in the two-day workshop organised by **INSTRUCT**, in Bangalore 24 .01. 2003

7. Made a presentation in a two-day workshop on Water Management “RWH – The Chennai Experience” organised by the Enviro club of Loyola College, Chennai 6 .03. 2003.
8. Made a presentation in a workshop on RWH organised by St.Xaviers college, Mapusa, Goa 8 .03.2003. This was reported in Navhind Times, a local newspaper dt.9 .03.2003
9. Made a presentation in a two-day workshop on RWH organized by the Centre for Appropriate Rural technology (CART) in Mysore on 10-11.03. 2003.
10. Made a presentation in a one-day seminar on “Modern Trends in Civil Engineering” Organised by Jaya Engineering College, Thiruniravur on 15 .03. 2003.
11. Made a presentation in a one day seminar on RWH organised by Seventh Day Adventist Church, Southern Asia Division, in Hosur on 19 .03. 2003
12. Made a presentation in a seminar organised by the Dept.of Anthropology, University of Madras on 21 .03. 2003