

AKASH GANGA TRUST - RAIN CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2004-2005
(April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005)

1. VISITS TO SRILANKA

Dr. Sekhar Raghavan, First Trustee, Akash Ganga Trust and Director, Rain Centre was invited to Srilanka by Ms. Tanuja Ariyananda, Chairman Lanka RWH Forum to participate and present a paper on “Rainwater Harvesting – The Chennai Experience” in the Symposium on “RWH for Urban Areas” held in Colombo on June 26, 2004. This Symposium was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Minister for Urban Development and Water Supply, Govt. of Srilanka. Dr. Sekhar was once again invited by the Water Supply Department, Govt. of Srilanka to participate in another seminar organized by them on October 21, 2004. The Minister in a private meeting expressed his desire to set up a Rain Centre in his office and sought our help.

2. PARTICIPATION IN EXHIBITIONS

1. Participated in an exhibition for builders “PROP WORLD” organised by Rotary club of Madras 2-4.10.2004
2. Participated in an exhibition for Self Help Groups “ROTARY NGO EXPO 2005” organised by Rotary International Dist. 3230 at Dr. MGR Janaki College and also participated in a panel discussion 24.2.2005

3. JAPANESE STUDENTS’ VISIT TO THE RAIN CENTRE

A group of ten college students belonging to the “People for Rainwater” group in Tokyo, Japan visited Chennai during December 19 to 28, 2004 to learn about RWH. They were guests of the center and spent ten days in Chennai. A full day workshop on Rainwater Harvesting in Urban Areas was organized for them at the center with the help of an interpreter. They were shown some of the RWH done at the micro level in apartment complexes, schools and colleges. They were then taken to Kancheepuram both for sight seeing as well as to see the traditional water harvesting systems such as the erys (irrigation tanks), temple tanks, ponds etc. For them, both the traditional water harvesting systems in rural areas and the ground water recharge techniques adopted in urban areas were quite new and they were happy to learn about them.

4. WHERE DO CHENNAI-ITES GET THEIR WATER FROM? – A SURVEY

With Chennai city facing an unprecedented water shortage, the Rain Centre thought it important to find out how citizens are managing their water needs for potable and non-potable uses. The first of this effort was a survey carried out in Adyar neighbourhood in April 2004. The findings of the survey revealed clearly that the drought had made Chennai residents realize the importance of water as well as the need to sustain the groundwater source through rainwater harvesting.

It also indicated that they have not only learnt to live with less water but have also felt the need to reuse the so called waste water. It was also clear from the survey that the water authorities - Chennai Metrowater Board were able to supply only a small percentage of the water needs of the citizens. A large portion of their needs were met either from groundwater sources within their premises or from groundwater sources in the suburbs brought and supplied through tankers. The findings of the survey was published in The Hindu dt. 23.5.2004, The New Indian Express dt.25.5.2004 and Madras Musings dt. 1.6.2004.

5. REPORT ON WAYS TO HARVEST THE URBAN RUNOFF

A report containing a few suggestions to harvest the urban runoff both in places where there already exists a stormwater drain and where there is no drain, was prepared by the center and submitted to the Secretary, Municipal Administration and Water Supply Dept. Govt. of Tamil Nadu. In a meeting organized by the Secretary, the proposals were explained to the Commissioner, Chennai Corporation who agreed to implement it in one road as a pilot project. These proposals were subsequently released to the print media and were reported by the New Indian Express dated September 13, 2004 in News Today dated October 2, 2004 and in the tamil daily Dina Thanthi dated October 6, 2004. Another article on how the stagnant water on the road could be usefully harvested by the residents themselves was written and submitted to the local newspapers. This appeared in Madras Musings besides a few other neighbourhood newspapers such as Adyar Times, Apollo Times and Mylapore Times during September, October 2004.

6. OFFER OF FREE INSPECTION OF RWH STRUCTURES

The need to sensitise the residents on the importance of periodic maintenance of the RWH structures provided by them in their respective premises was felt by the center. A small note was prepared by the center offering free inspection of the RWH systems put up by the residents and got it published in in a few neighbourhood newspapers such as Adyar Times, Mylapore Times, Mambalam Times and Madras Musings during August to November.

7. VISITORS TO THE RAIN CENTRE

1. Thirty children from The School- K.F.I. on 1.04.2004
2. Two students from Cardiff University on 18.08.2004 to learn about RWH
3. Twenty students and 4 teachers from American International school, Chennai on 20.09.2004
4. Two Researchers from Lanka RWH Forum a NGO in Colombo on 12.10.2004
5. Shri Gokhale, Secretary, Min. of Non-conventional Energy Sources, Government of India, on 14.10.2004
6. Two senior officials from the Karnataka Police Housing Corporation on 15.10.2004

7. Mr. D.K.Manavalan, Director, Action for Food Production, New Delhi (The NGO, which is the main sponsor of the IRCSA conference to be held in NMew Delhi during 15-18, November, 2005) on 27.10.2004
8. An M.Phil. student from Pondicherry University visited in connection with his project work on RWH on 3.11.2004
9. The Dy. Manager, Water Board, Govt. of Srilanka at Anuradhapura on 12.11.2004
10. Seventeen students from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, on 30.11.2004
11. A group of Govt. officials from West Bengal, on 23.12.2004

8. PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS WITHIN CHENNAI AND OUTSIDE

Dr. Sekhar Raghavan was invited by the Bokaro Steel authorities to make a site visit in order to explore the possibility of implementing RWH in their premises and submit a report to the Chairman. The visit was made in October 2004 and a presentation on RWH was also made for their senior executives. He was also invited by TATA Steel in November 2004 to be one of the judges for the Association of British Scholars Debate among school students for the Tata Steel Rolling Trophy and also a panelist. The other judges were Shri Rajinder Singh of Tarun Bharat Sangh, Bittu Sehgal, Editor, Sanctuary and Prof. David Butler, Imperial College, London.

1. Gave a talk on Composting Toilets in the monthly meeting of the Nature Treatment Centre, Aduthurai, on 18.04.2004
1. Gave a talk at the Ability Foundation, Gandhi Nagar, Adyar for the visually handicapped and hearing impaired youth on 19.05.2004
2. Gave a talk in the NEAC awareness meetings organized by Mrs. SRMSC Trust in Kasturba Nagar on 25.7.2004 and at the Rain Centre on 29.07.2004
3. Gave a talk in the NEAC awareness meeting for school children organized by Centre for Women Development and Research in Thiruvanmiyur on 28.07.2004
4. Gave a talk in the awareness meeting organised by Rotary Club of Gudur in Gudur on 19.08.2004
5. Participated in the Annual Day celebrations of Rasamanickanar School as chief guest, distributed prizes and also spoke to the children and parents on 11.12.2004
6. Gave a talk in a RWH awareness public meeting organized by SUBHAM, an NGO held in Adyar on 26.02.2005
7. Gave a talk in the NSS camp organized by Aalim Muhammed Salegh college of Engineering at Avadi on 3.03.2005.
8. Made a presentation as a panelist in the Workshop on “Approaches to the Solution of Water and Sanitation problems of Chennai metro Area” on 17.07.2004
9. Made a presentation as a panelist in the Conference on “Water Management and Conservation” organized by CII on 30.06.2004