

The Art of Living's Jaltara: A Blueprint for Water Security in Rural India

Category: Business

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In the drought-scorched fields of Kesaramadu Gram Panchayat, Tumkur, Karnataka, hope flows anew. Powered by **The Art of Living Social Projects** in partnership with Wipro, the Jaltara Recharge Structures Project is transforming the lives of farmers and rewriting the story of water scarcity in rural India.



Prasana Prabhu, Chairman, The Art of Living Social Projects inaugurates landmark JalTara project in Tumkur

Over nine months, from December 2023 to September 2024, this initiative has brought hope and water security to 154 farmers, rejuvenating over 500 acres of farmland through the construction of 500 recharge pits. Groundwater levels have improved, agricultural productivity has surged, and borewell water availability has significantly increased in many locations. Environmentally, the initiative has curbed water runoff while bolstering groundwater recharge. Inspired by this success, the partnership plans to expand the model to other drought-prone regions, bringing water security to more communities.



Breaking ground: JalTara recharge structure takes shape

JalTara: A Dual Shield against Drought and Floods

What makes JalTara truly extraordinary is its two fold impact – it combats both drought and flooding. During dry spells, the recharge structures replenish depleted groundwater, providing farmers with a sustainable lifeline for irrigation and household needs. When the rains arrive, these structures act as guardians, preventing soil erosion by curbing water runoff and protecting the fertile topsoil vital for agricultural health.

Efficient, adaptable, and economical, JalTara's design allows for rapid implementation without requiring heavy machinery or labor-intensive processes. Its versatility ensures it can be replicated across diverse terrains, offering an immensely scalable solution to India's water woes.

From Parched Lands to Thriving Fields

Water scarcity isn't just an environmental concern – it's a daily battle for survival in rural areas. Farmers often grapple with failing crops, mounting debts, and dwindling livelihoods. The JalTara project addresses these struggles with a simple yet effective solution: recharge structures that replenish groundwater and reduce dependency on unpredictable

monsoons.

For Chandrashekhar, a farmer in Kesaramadu, the transformation has been remarkable. *“With 16 recharge pits on my land, I’ve seen a rise in groundwater levels. My crops flourish, and irrigation is no longer a gamble,”* he shares.

Satish, another beneficiary, echoes the sentiment: *“Before JalTara, my borewell often ran dry, forcing me to consider costly alternatives. Now, with the recharge pit, water availability has doubled, and my farming costs have dropped.”*

A Scientific Approach with a Human Touch

JalTara’s success lies in its blend of scientific precision and community involvement. It begins with meticulous groundwork:

- **Surveys and Studies:** Detailed assessments pinpoint the best locations for recharge pits, ensuring maximum effectiveness.
- **Community Engagement:** Farmers are actively involved, learning about water conservation and sustainable practices, encouraging them to take ownership of the solution.
- **Green Initiatives:** Saplings are distributed for planting, complementing the recharge structures and enhancing the region’s ecological balance.

This integrated approach addresses water scarcity while fostering long term environmental and socio economic resilience.

A Collaboration Driving Impact

The partnership between The Art of Living Social Projects, Wipro, local volunteers, and farmers turned the vision of

water security into tangible outcomes. Farmers like Shreedhar, who once struggled with expensive borewell drilling, now advocate for recharge pits. *“For a fraction of the cost of a borewell, I’ve built three pits that provide reliable water throughout the year,”* he shares.

From Local Success to National Impact

The success in Kesaramadu has demonstrated how effective the JalTara model is in addressing water related challenges. The initiative has improved groundwater availability, revitalised agriculture, and restored environmental balance in the region. Its adaptability ensures that the model can be scaled to tackle drought and flooding challenges across India, paving the way for sustainable water management.

Beyond the Numbers

JalTara isn't just about pits or percentages; it's about empowering communities to reclaim their resources and livelihoods. It exemplifies how the combination of science, compassion, and grassroots action can yield transformational change.

As we look ahead, sustainable water management remains essential, not optional. Initiatives like JalTara show that when communities, organisations, and innovative solutions come together, the future flows with possibilities.

About The Art of Living Social Projects

The Art of Living, a global non-profit organisation dedicated to peace, well-being, and humanitarian service founded in 1981 by the world-renowned humanitarian and spiritual leader Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, collaborates with various organisations and the Government of India to combat water scarcity through numerous water conservation projects.

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