



The Akshaya Patra Foundation
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As General Manager of The World's Biggest Kitchen in Asia, engaged in catering midday meals to feed 180,000 children studying in various schools spread across northern Karnataka state (India), water plays a vital role in our operations. We need to consume clean water to maintain high standards and quality food fully loaded with nutrients.

Our kitchen (the biggest in the Akshaya Patra system) cooks 15 tons of rice a day and also 26,800 liters of sambar with dal (lentils). Often our operations were frequently interrupted due to acute shortages of water that forced us even to purchase water in tankers for smooth functioning at exorbitant prices. We had to resort to this purchasing of water because we had exhausted our own bore well water supply.

With the support from the Deshpande Foundation, the Water Literacy Foundation (WLF) was assigned to harvest rainwater within our premises stretching across 3 acres of land. WLF adopted several innovative rainwater harvesting techniques to maximize the efficiency of the structures, which resulted in the enhancement of sub-soil moisture and groundwater table. They also installed a system that cleans and then allows us to reuse dirty water.

Water is an important resource and it is growing more scarce and costly everyday. Akshaya Patra is no more buying water from the outside sources. We can completely meet our needs from the water collected through rainwater harvesting. This saves us around one million Rupees a year. Since we are constantly trying to make the provision of a healthy midday meal less costly per student—at first it was 7 Rupees per student, then 3—as well as meet our goal of feeding 1 million students by 2010, these water savings are very important.

Improvement in the water yield from the bore wells not only allowed us to continue our work while cutting costs, but we know from our neighbors that open wells within one kilometer radius of the premises have also benefited, now holding more water than before.

We are very thankful to the Water Literacy Foundation for helping us to continue our mission to feed the children of India and keep them coming to school. This rainwater harvesting and water reusing is an important tool and I wish it will spread to other factories and people.

Regards,
B. Subramanyam
General Manager, TAPF Hubli – Dharwad Branch