

Investments in rainwater harvesting are an investment for the planet

The water crisis is the "great global challenge" of our day states, Matt Damon, from Water.org in an exclusive interview with Newsweek magazine.

Annually, nearly a million people die from water, sanitation, and hygiene-related diseases — a child dying every 2 minutes. Waterborne diseases have been identified as a key cause that stunt the mental and physical growth of children from areas with acute water shortages. "Around 74% of natural disasters between 2001 and 2018 were water-related, including droughts and floods" (UN WWDR 2020). Climate change could lead to dry regions becoming more dry and wet regions to be more wet, increasing the risk of both droughts and flooding. The increasing demand and the depletion of freshwater sources call for investments in alternatives such as rainwater harvesting for drinking water, agriculture and other industries and increasing the resilience amid climate induced disaster situations.

This webinar aims to explain the returns/benefits of rainwater harvesting to the communities for their lives and livelihoods with emphasis on the South Asian region affected by acute water shortages.

Investments in rainwater harvesting include and are not limited to financial support, the importance of training people such as masons on the construction of building rainwater tanks construction, incentives offered by governments, and commercial ventures such as banks that encourage communities to adopt rainwater harvesting at the household level such as tax and tariff concessions and the cost-saving by not having to provide water supply to long distances and costs for water purification etc.

Similarly, the cost savings on the national governments' budget allocation on health, and relief measures during climate-induced disasters because of adopting rainwater harvesting and minimizing extraction and minimising in depletion of groundwater resources is an investment in groundwater.

The misconceptions that hinder investments in rainwater harvesting could be a lack of awareness about the short term and long-term benefits and the lack of strong lobbying efforts. The root cause of the lack of awareness of the actual benefits of investments in rainwater harvesting results due to a lack of adequate evidence on the return on investments for rainwater harvesting for the people and the planet.