



# Varsha

වර්ෂා Varsha வர்ஷா

## LRWHF WINS SRI LANKA WATER CHAMPION AWARD UNDER YOUTH AND SCHOOLS CATEGORY



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**Page 11** - Childrens Corner

Lanka Rain Water Harvesting Forum (LRWHF) has been honoured with the Sri Lanka Water Champion Award by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Sri Lanka, under the Youth and Schools category. The award was presented in recognition of LRWHF's outstanding work titled "Empowering School Children on Climate Change Adaptation with Rainwater Harvesting."

This recognition acknowledges LRWHF's sustained contribution over the past nine years in promoting sustainable water solutions and climate change adaptation among school children and youth across Sri Lanka. Through a wide range of engaging and educational activities, LRWHF has successfully fostered awareness, creativity, and practical understanding of rainwater harvesting and water conservation.

These initiatives have included water quizzes, rainwater harvesting model designing competitions, debates, short film creation, poster designing, wall art, and school drama, all aimed at encouraging young minds to think critically and act responsibly towards water sustainability and climate resilience.

Continued on the next page

LRWHF extends its sincere appreciation to all school children and youth who enthusiastically participated in these programmes. We also gratefully acknowledge the invaluable support provided by school principals, teachers, education officials, and parents, whose guidance and encouragement played a key role in the success of these initiatives. Our special thanks go to USAID for funding and supporting these programmes, enabling their continued impact and reach.



## RAINWATER HARVESTING: A LIFELINE DURING CYCLONE DITWAH

Cyclone Ditwah clearly demonstrated the dual nature of rain. While intense rainfall and flooding caused severe damage to infrastructure and disrupted national water supply systems, harvested rainwater emerged as a critical solution during the crisis. This experience reinforced an important lesson: with the right systems in place, solutions can be found even in the most challenging situations.

As centralized water systems failed in many affected areas, rainwater harvesting (RWH) systems installed in schools and households played a vital role in meeting urgent water needs. These systems provided safe and reliable water for relief centres and displaced families, proving their value not only as a climate adaptation measure but also as an emergency response solution.

Several schools equipped with rainwater harvesting systems functioned as relief centres during Cyclone Ditwah. The principals of these schools shared valuable reflections on how the systems supported their communities during the emergency:

- Ku/Weragala Sri Rahula K.V.  
Principal: Mr. W. M. Ashoka Wanninayaka
- B/Kendagolla Ampitiya M.V.  
Principal: Mr. S. P. Suraweera
- B/Dikkapitiya Vidyalaya  
Principal: Mr. R. M. S. Ranaweera
- B/Vibulanandar Tamil M.V., Haldumulla  
Principal: Mr. K. Sundararaj



Relief Center -Ku/Weragala Sri Rahula K.V.

They highlighted that the availability of harvested rainwater ensured uninterrupted access to water for drinking, cooking, and sanitation at a time when alternative sources were unavailable or unsafe.



B/Vibulanandar Tamil M.V., Haldumulla



B/Dikkapitiya Vidyalaya

The impact of rainwater harvesting was also evident at the household level. Mr. D. M. Saman Kumara, a beneficiary from Ridemaliyadda, shared that during the cyclone, the rainwater tank at his home not only met his family's needs but also enabled him to distribute water to neighbouring households, demonstrating community resilience and solidarity supported by simple yet effective water solutions.

## RAIN TO RESILIENCE, TRANSFORMING CRISIS INTO WATER SECURITY

### Rainwater, an Overlooked Lifeline

Amid these challenges, a quiet but powerful practice proved its value. Households with gutters, simple collection systems, or even temporary containers were able to harvest rainwater for immediate use. Buckets, barrels, and storage tanks became lifelines.

In my own household, although we do not have a large rainwater harvesting system, we were able to collect rainwater for bathing and washing. This helped conserve stored well water at a time when pumping was impossible due to power outages. Similar experiences were shared by many families who had previously viewed rainwater harvesting as optional rather than essential.

One particularly compelling example was shared by Dr. Nishara Dissanayake of Kandaketiya Base Hospital, Badulla, who described on Facebook how collected rainwater was used in the hospital when no water was available

““නායට අහු උනා” කියාගෙන ගැනු කෙනෙක් පටවා ගත්ත Threewheel එකක් ඉස්පිරිතාලෙට කඩා වැශ්‍යනා.

මඩ වලින් වැශ්‍යලා තිවිය ලෙඩා සේයුන්න වතුර ලින්දුවක් වත් තිබෙලි නැ.

මෙහෙම දෙයක් වෙයි කියලා ඉවත්න් වගේ දැනිලද කොහොද දම්මි මිස් ඒ වෙදින්

පිළි වලින් වැටෙන වැහි වතුර පරණ බාල්දි වලට එකතු වෙන්න තියලයි තිබෙලේ.

ඒ ලෙඩා වගේම අනින් ලෙඩ්බූන්ටත් අන්තිම වෙදින් අපිටත් ඉතුරු උනේ ඒ වැහි වතුර විතරයි.”



In situations where water access is critical for infection prevention and patient dignity, rainwater played a decisive, life-saving role.

These experiences reinforce a fundamental truth, rainwater harvesting is not merely an environmental or sustainability practice, it is a disaster resilience intervention.

### From Hazard to Resource

In disaster discourse, rain is often framed solely as a hazard, an agent of floods, landslides, and destruction. While these risks are real, this framing overlooks rain's potential as a strategic resource. The recent crisis demonstrated that rainwater, when safely collected and stored, can significantly reduce vulnerability during service disruptions.

For a country like Sri Lanka, where rainfall is abundant but unevenly distributed, rainwater harvesting is a practical, locally appropriate, and cost-effective solution. Yet, despite decades of advocacy, its integration into mainstream disaster preparedness remains limited. This calls for a shift, from managing rain only through drainage and flood control, to actively capturing and using rainwater as part of emergency preparedness and response.

### Strengthening Resilience through Rainwater Harvesting

Turning lessons into action requires institutionalizing rainwater harvesting across multiple levels,

#### 1. Household Preparedness

Household-level rainwater collection should be promoted as a basic preparedness measure. Even low-cost systems, including gutters, portable storage containers, and simple first-flush mechanisms, can provide critical water during sudden emergencies. Public awareness campaigns and technical guidance are essential to encourage safe collection and storage practices.

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## RAIN TO RESILIENCE,TRANSFORMING CRISIS INTO WATER SECURITY

### 2. Community Awareness through CBDRM

Rainwater harvesting should be promoted through community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) initiatives. Identifying households with rainwater harvesting systems and encouraging water sharing during emergencies can strengthen collective resilience and solidarity at the community level.

### 3. Rainwater Harvesting Systems as Emergency Infrastructure

Public buildings used as emergency shelters, such as schools, community halls, religious institutions, and multipurpose centres, should be equipped with functional rainwater harvesting systems (RWHS). These facilities often host displaced populations for extended periods, where water demand for sanitation, cleaning, and hygiene is high.

### 4. Health Facilities and Critical Services

All hospitals, primary health centres, and maternity clinics should have rainwater harvesting systems integrated into their emergency water supply plans. Water security in health facilities must not depend solely on centralized supply networks, particularly during disasters.

### 5. Capacity Building and Education

Communities should be trained to collect rainwater safely during emergencies, even without permanent systems. This includes guidance on basic filtration, hygienic storage, and prioritization of water use during crisis periods.

### 6. Policy and Planning Integration

Rainwater harvesting must be embedded within national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, climate adaptation plans, and water security policies. Aligning these efforts with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, national disaster management strategies, rainwater policies, and climate resilience agendas will ensure long-term impact.

### Building Back Better with Water Security at the Core

Rain is a natural and recurring phenomenon. While we cannot prevent heavy rainfall, we can choose how prepared we are to manage its impacts. The recent disaster showed that emergency water security cannot rely on centralized systems alone. Decentralized rainwater harvesting is not a luxury, it is a necessity.

As professionals working in water, disaster risk reduction, and development, we have both the responsibility and the opportunity to advocate for solutions that are simple, scalable, and life-saving. If we are serious about resilience, we must ensure that the next time disaster strikes, communities are not left without water while rain falls all around them. Turning rain into resilience is not just possible, it is imperative.

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## දිට්වා සුළු කුණාවුවෙන් ලද අත්දැකීම සහ අපේ ජල සුරක්ෂිතතාවයේ අනාගතය

මැතකදී ශ්‍රී ලංකාවට බලපෑ 'දිට්වා' (Ditwa) සුළු කුණාවුව, මෙරට ජල සුරක්ෂිතතාවය පිළිබඳ බරපතල ප්‍රශ්නාර්ථයක් මතු කළේය. අධික වර්ෂාව හේතුවෙන් ඇති වූ ගංවතුර සහ නායාම් නිසා ජ්‍රීත්ත හා දේපළ විශාල ප්‍රමාණයක් විනාශ වූ අතර, දහස් සංඛ්‍යාත පිරිසක් අවතුන් විය. මෙම ව්‍යසනය පුදෙක් සංඛ්‍යාලේඛනයකට සීමා නොවී, රටේ සැම පුරවැසියෙකුගේම පාහේ දෙනික ජ්‍රීත්තයට සං්ජ්‍ර බලපෑම් එල්ල කළේය.

මෙවැනි අරුමුදකාරී මොහොතක, වැසි ජලය රස් කිරීමේ සරල ක්‍රමවේද අනුගමනය කළ පවුල් සහ ආයතන වලට එය විශාල සහනයක් විය. බදුල්ල කන්දකුටිය මූලික රෝහල වැනි අත්තවා සේවා සපයන ස්ථාන පවා, ජල සැපයුම තැවතුණු මොහොතේ රෝහින්ගේ සහිපාරක්ෂක කටයුතු සඳහා වැසි ජලය සාර්ථකව හාවිතා කළේය. මෙයින් පෙනී යන්නේ වැසි ජලය රස් කිරීම යනු පුදෙක් පාරිසරික ක්‍රියාවක් පමණක් නොව, එය ආපදා වලට ඔරෝත්තු දීමේ ප්‍රබල උපාය මාර්ගයක් බවයි

ව්‍යසනයෙන් උගත් පාඩම් පාදක කරගනීමින්, වඩාත් ඔරෝත්තු දෙන ජල සුරක්ෂිතතාවයක් සඳහා පහත පියවර අත්තවා වේ:

- නිවාස මට්ටමින් සුදානම: සරල වැසි පිළි සහ බදුන් හාවිතයෙන් වැසි ජලය රස් කිරීමට පවුල් උනන්දු කිරීම.
- පොදු ගොඩනැගිලි සන්නද්ධ කිරීම: පාසල්, ආගමික ස්ථාන සහ ප්‍රජා ගාලාවල වැසි ජලය රස් කිරීමේ පද්ධති ස්ථාපනය කිරීම.
- සෞඛ්‍ය මධ්‍යස්ථාන සුරක්ෂිත කිරීම: සැම රෝහලකම හඳුසි ජල සැපයුම් සැලසුම් සඳහා වැසි ජලය ඇතුළත් කිරීම.
- ප්‍රතිපත්තිමය වෙනස්කම්: ජාතික ආපදා කළමනාකරණ සහ දේශගුණික අනුවර්තන සැලසුම්වලට වැසි ජලය රස් කිරීම අනිවාර්ය අංගයක් ලෙස ඇතුළත් කිරීම.

නිගමනය

අධික වර්ෂාව අපට පාලනය කළ නොහැකි වූවද, ඉන් ලැබෙන ජලය සම්පතක් ලෙස හාවිතා කිරීමට අපට හැකියාව ඇතු. මධ්‍යගත පද්ධති මත පමණක් යැපීමෙන් මිදි, විමධ්‍යගත වැසි ජලය රස් කිරීමේ ක්‍රමවේද අනුගමනය කිරීම මිශ්‍ර ආපදාවකදී අපට සුරක්ෂිත කරනු ඇතු. වැස්ස අන්තරායක් නොව, එය ඔරෝත්තු දීමේ ගක්තියක් (Resilience) බවට පත් කර ගැනීම වර්තමානයේ අනිවාර්ය අවශ්‍යතාවයකි.



## BUILDING CLIMATE-RESILIENT FARMS: COMPLETION OF A 10-DAY INTEGRATED RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND ECOSYSTEM IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT

A comprehensive 10-day capacity-building programme on integrated farm planning, land management, and sustainable agriculture practices was successfully concluded on 19 December 2025. The programme was designed to strengthen farmers' knowledge and practical skills in climate-resilient, resource-efficient farming systems through a phased and participatory approach.

The programme commenced with a strong foundation on understanding farmers' needs and available resources. Participants collectively identified their economic, social, and environmental needs, while assessing on-farm resources such as crops, soil, water availability, tree cover, biodiversity, light, wind, labour, and waste. Key challenges were discussed, followed by the preparation of base maps and detailed farm maps, which formed the basis for individualized farm plans.

Building on this groundwork, farmers were guided through landscape and farm planning, including the preparation of practical farm management plans. These sessions enabled participants to visualize their land holistically and plan cultivation activities in harmony with natural systems.



The programme then moved into implementation phases, focusing on land clearing, fence construction, water management through pathahas, canals, and soil conservation measures. Further sessions covered land preparation, crop selection, seed propagation, planting techniques, determining plant densities, and planning for crop health. Participants were introduced to sequential cropping, intercropping, mixed cropping, and vegetable cultivation in raised beds, enhancing both productivity and resilience.



A strong emphasis was placed on soil health, recognizing soil as a living organism. Farmers learned to prepare liquid compost fertilizers, plant compost, and pile compost through hands-on demonstrations and field visits. These practical sessions reinforced the importance of organic matter and microbial activity in improving soil fertility.

Continued on the next page

## BUILDING CLIMATE-RESILIENT FARMS: COMPLETION OF A 10-DAY INTEGRATED RESOURCES MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND ECOSYSTEM IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT

The programme also included design review sessions, where landscape designs of eight farms were revised collaboratively by farmers and staff, integrating the skills and knowledge gained during earlier sessions. Demonstration activities were conducted at selected sites, including planting around pathahas and wells, with the active participation of neighboring farmers, encouraging peer learning and replication.

Pest management was addressed through training on biochemical and natural pest control methods, including preparations using Andrographis paniculata, Sida spinosa, neem-based solutions, garlic–ginger–chilli mixtures, cow dung extracts, and cow urine and buttermilk combinations. These methods offered farmers environmentally friendly alternatives to chemical pesticides.



The final session focused on the preparation of vermicompost, vermiwash, and Jeevamrutham, completing the programme with practical tools to enhance soil fertility and crop productivity in a sustainable manner. In addition, two technical training programmes with hands-on demonstrations were conducted during the final sessions. These covered heap compost preparation, compost and vermicompost production, the preparation and application of five types of bio-pesticides, and the preparation of Jeewa Amurtham bio-fertilizer. These practical trainings significantly enhanced farmers' technical knowledge and promoted the adoption of environmentally sustainable agricultural practices.



Overall, this 10-day programme empowered farmers with practical knowledge, hands-on experience, and confidence to implement climate-smart agricultural practices. It strengthened their ability to manage land and water resources effectively, improve productivity, and build resilient farming systems suited to local conditions.

## **SHADE HOUSE FACILITIES ESTABLISHED TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PLANT NURSERIES**

Two plant nurseries were established at Diwlgane, Ehetuwewa Divisional Secretariat under the project Integrated Resources Management of Water and Ecosystem. Operation and maintainance of the plant nurseries by the trained farmers will continue to support to maintain and increase productivity of multi layered agroforestry system in the home garden established in the area..

The shade houses were established at Divulganewa, in the Ehetuwewa Divisional Secretariat, on 19 and 23 December 2025 to support community-based nursery operators in producing healthy, high-quality planting material.

Each structure covers an area of 350 square feet and is designed to provide a controlled growing environment for vegetable plants, particularly chilli seedlings, which are highly vulnerable to pests such as whiteflies and mites.

At present, the two nurseries collectively maintain approximately 2,000 vegetable plants under the shade net structures. The protected environment has significantly reduced pest infestations and improved overall plant health, resulting in stronger and more resilient seedlings.



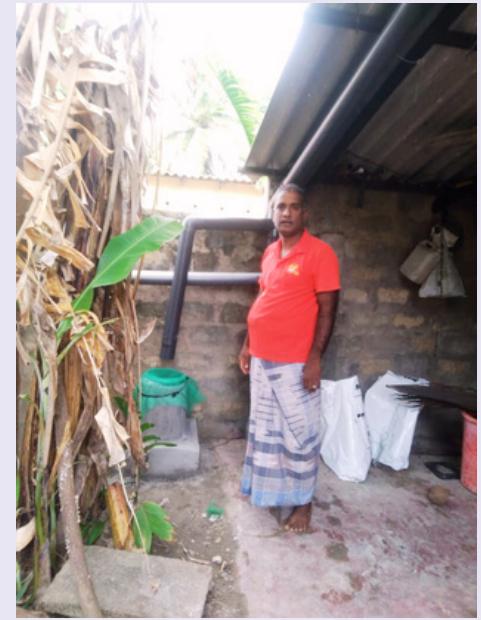
The establishment of these shade nets represents an important step toward enhancing local nursery infrastructure, promoting environmentally responsible cultivation practices, and improving livelihoods through reliable and high-quality plant production.

யாழ் ப்பாணத்தன் நீர் நெருக்கடிக்கு நடையான தீர்வு: ஊர்காவற்துறை மற்றும் கோப்பாய் ஆகைய பிரதேசங்களில் மழைநீர் மூலம் கிணற்று நீரினை மீள்வலுவுட்டல் தட்டம் ஆரம்பம்.

ஊர்காவற்துறை மற்றும் கோப்பாய் ஆகைய பிரதேசங்களில் மழைநீர் மூலம் கிணற்று நீரினை மீள்வலுவுட்டல் திட்டம் ஆரம்பம்

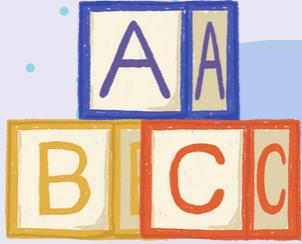
வடமாகாணத்தில் யாழ், குடாநாட்டில் அதிகரித்து வரும் நீர் நெருக்கடியை எதிர்கொள்ளும் ஒரு மூலோபாய நடவடிக்கையாக, கிணற்று நீரினை மீள்வலுவுட்டும் செயற்றிட்டமொன்று உத்தியோகபூர்வமாக ஆரம்பிக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. இத்திட்டம் தற்போது ஊர்காவற்துறை (நாராந்தனை மற்றும் கரம்பென்) மற்றும் கோப்பாய் (இருபாலை வசந்தபுரம், மடத்தடி) ஆகைய கிராமங்களில் நடைமுறைப்படுத்தப்பட்டு வருகின்றது.

சர்வதேச நீர் மேலாண்மை நிறுவனம் வழங்கிய ஆதரவுடன், இலங்கை மழைநீர் சேகரிப்பு அமைப்பு இத்திட்டத்தை முன்னெடுத்து வருகின்றது. நிலத்தடி நீர் மட்டம் குறைந்து வருதல் மற்றும் உள்ளூர் கிணறுகளில் உவர் தன்மை அதிகரித்தல் ஆகைய இரு பெரும் சவால்களுக்கும் தீர்வுகாண்பதே இத்திட்டத்தின் பிரதான நோக்கமாகும்.



தூய்மையான குடிநீருக்கான அவசரத் தேவையைக் கருத்திற்கொண்டு, குறைந்த வருமானம் பெறும் குடும்பங்கள் மற்றும் பெண் தலைமைத்துவக் குடும்பங்களுக்கு முன்னுரிமை அளித்து 20 பயணாளிக் குடும்பங்கள் இத்திட்டத்திற்காகத் தேர்ந்தெடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளனர். இத்திட்டத்தின் ஆரம்ப நிகழ்வின் ஒரு பகுதியாக, புதிய கட்டமைப்புகளை நீண்டகாலம் வெற்றிகரமாகப் பராமரிப்பது எவ்வாறு என்பது குறித்து இக்குடும்பங்களுக்கு இலங்கை மழைநீர் சேகரிப்பு அமைப்பினால் (LRWHF) விசேட பயிற்சி அளிக்கப்பட்டது.





## CHILDREN'S CORNER

**Fill in the Blanks – Rainwater Harvesting**

1. Rainwater harvesting helps save \_\_\_\_\_ water.  
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ collects rainwater from the roof.  
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is used to clean rainwater before storage.  
4. Stored rainwater can be used for gardening and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Fresh Gutter Filter Washing**



# Varsha

වර්ෂා Varsha வர்ஷா

Please send your creations, ideas, letters, articles and suggestions to the address given below.

ඔබේ අදහස්, යෝජනා, නිර්මාණ සහ ලිපි මෙම ලිපිනයට එවන්න.

உங்கள் ஆக்கங்கள், கடிதங்கள், கட்டுரைகள் மற்றும் பரிந்துரைகளை கொடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ள முகவரிக்கு அனுப்பவும்.

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