

# Water Conservation and Recycling at the BK Campuses in Rajasthan



The headquarters of the Brahma Kumaris in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, welcomes around 300,000 visitors every year to its 3 campuses, the largest of which is Shantivan situated in Abu Road. Thirty two thousand people can be accommodated at any one time and they often stay for 3 to 4 days in order to attend spiritual retreats, conferences and workshops, including ones to raise environmental awareness. The water requirements are therefore massive and include providing cold water for drinking and cooking, water for bathing, water for the Hospital and water for gardening.

The state of Rajasthan is in North West India and is very prone to droughts so as an organisation Brahma Kumaris have a clear aim to become a role model in sustainable practices regarding water usage. The underlying principle is to achieve zero water discharge which means that all wastewater is reused. There are several departments that act solely to manage and meet all the water requirements of the different campuses.

One department is the Water Conservation and Awareness Section and their role is to alert visitors and residents to the importance of being economical with water. They do this through educational campaigns, pamphlets, notice boards and exhibitions. They join with other BK centres around the country to organise nationwide campaigns, especially around World Water Day which happens every year in March.



There is also a Water Recycling Section which collects used water from bathrooms and dining rooms and processes it through an Effluent Treatment Plant. This kind of plant uses a process designed for treating wastewater so that it can be safely reused. In this case the wastewater is utilised for watering trees and plants in the numerous gardens that are dotted around the campuses and for agricultural purposes.



The Hot Water for Drinking Section and the Hot Water for Bathing Section use solar reflectors to concentrate solar energy to heat the water. This is also utilised to prepare steam for the solar cookers which can make in excess of 30,000 meals a day!



Collector dishes for solar water heating system

The Hot Water for Bathing Section uses a very ingenious technology to heat the water. Air Water Heaters pull heat from the surrounding air and use it to heat the water in storage tanks. In this way, more than 700,000 litres of water are heated everyday without the use of fossil fuels.



The Rain Water Harvesting Section also plays an important role in water conservation. Rainwater from various buildings around the campus are routed towards rainwater harvesting tanks.

Many of these very innovative practices are being applied where possible to other BK retreat centres and centres around India and the world.